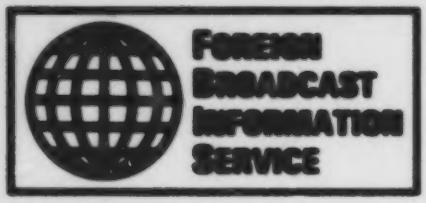

Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-084
Tuesday
30 April 1996

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-084 *30 April 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: Arab League Chief Comments on Visit to Lebanon

NC2804051896 Cairo MENA in English 2027 GMT 27 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 27 Apr (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid arrived in Alexandria this evening coming from Beirut after a brief visit to Lebanon during which he held talks with Speaker of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies Nabih Birri, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz.

The league chief said that the visit was to express the Arab League deep appreciation of the Lebanese people's steadfastness in confronting the barbaric Israeli aggression which continued for 16 days. Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid praised the courageous spirit of the Lebanese people and their resolve to restore their legitimate rights.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 23 Apr

NC2904103096

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 23 April edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Writers, Ulema Criticize Israeli Operations in Lebanon
2. Libyan Flight to Mecca Defies U.S. Embargo
3. Minister Allows Mosque Preachers To Choose Friday Sermons

WRITERS, ULEMA CRITICIZE ISRAELI OPERATIONS IN LEBANON

This edition of 'AQIDATI carries several articles and reports on the war in Lebanon. A 70-word unattributed report on page 1 under the banner headline "Jews Contravene Torah Teachings," notes that the Al-Azhar rector, Shaykh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, condemned the oppressive aggression against south Lebanon, the killing of innocent people, and the destruction of the infrastructure of a fraternal Arab country that welcomes the peace efforts and wants to live in peace with its neighbors. Shaykh Tantawi says the aggression is rejected by all heavenly laws, thus the Jews are contravening the teachings of their religion. He calls on the Islamic states to offer every form of material and moral support for Lebanon.

In a 500-word boxed column under the headline "The Israeli Massacre and the Muslims' Stance" on page 6, Basyuni al-Halawani says that Israeli Prime Minister Peres has unmasked his "ugly face" and been proven to be "a war criminal," not an advocate of peace, as he has tried to deceive us and the world. He claims that Peres has shown that he differs little from Golda Me'ir, Menahem Begin, Yitzhaq Shamir, and Me'ir Kahana. The Israeli massacre in Lebanon shows that Arab and Muslim blood is cheap in the eyes of Peres and his clique now that the Arabs and Islamic countries have opened their doors to receive him. He says that Peres and his band will not "escape vengeance" for this massacre, no matter how much the United States supports them. Concluding, he asks the Muslims what they are going to do and whether they will bury their heads and be content with verbal denunciation.

A 250-word unattributed report on pages 8 and 9 notes that in their Friday sermons, mosque preachers condemned the Israeli "oppressive aggression" against Lebanon and termed its actions there "barbaric and bestial," running counter to the teachings of all religions and international law. A named Cairo mosque preacher calls on the Arab and Islamic countries to adopt a unified stance to halt the Israeli attacks now that all the parties are seeking peace and security in the region.

Majdi Salim, in a 500-word boxed column headlined "Israel And its Protectors Will Regret" on page 10, says that every Muslim is overwhelmed by wrath against the barbaric Israeli operation, Grapes of Wrath, against the Lebanese people. He says he agrees with some analysts that Israel's activity in Lebanon is a dress rehearsal for what it intends to do against steadfast Syria. He suggests that the real goal might be "to drag the Syrian forces into a battle" for which they are not prepared to destroy "the only remaining Arab force confronting Israel." He stresses that despite its enormous arsenal, Israel has failed to destroy Hizballah, just as it failed to destroy the Palestinian intifadah of the stonethrowers. He argues that Israel does not realize that, with these actions, it will create new generations who will know only one thing: "Vengeance."

A 2,200-word account on pages 20 and 21, "'Grapes of wrath' triggers a Volcano of Wrath in the Egyptian Street," by Ibrahim Nasr, Muhammad al-Abnudi, and Jamal Salim, says the Israeli massacres in south Lebanon caused "volcanoes of wrath to erupt in the Arab and Islamic world." It claims that the Muslim masses in Egypt call for "a serious position" on the Jewish aggression against the Lebanese people and land. They stressed that "U.S. support for the Israeli aggression" must not drive us into despair and into accepting the status quo. The Israeli slaughter has also triggered anger against

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the international community for its inaction to end Israel's violations of every international law and human rights. The account notes that the Islamic ulema reject this "farce."

Dr. Muhammad al-Birri, chairman of the al-Azhar Ulema Front, says that we must be vigilant because the Jews, as the Koran describes them, are "treacherous and perfidious." He says that he does not rule out that Israel had something to do with the attack on the Greek tourists in Cairo in order to strike tourism in Egypt. He claims that what is taking place in the Middle East is "a major plot against Arabs and Muslims."

Islamic thinker Dr. Mustafa al-Shak'ah says that what is happening in Lebanon is not a puzzle and Israel is taking advantage of the United States, which dominates the world. He says Israel is humiliating the Lebanese militarily and the Palestinians in the West Bank morally. Certain Arab countries, he says, are rushing to establish ties with Israel at the expense of their dignity. He argues that the United States is "directly and primarily responsible" because it always uses "the veto against Arabs and Muslims" and tries to make us believe that we are their friends.

In a 750-word article on page 21 under the headline: "The Israeli Aggression Against Lebanon Aimed at Testing a New U.S. Weapon," Ashraf Abu-al-Hawl says that the aggression against Lebanon is not only prompted by Peres' desire to win the elections. He says that the United States, "the sponsor of peace in the Middle East and an advocate of democracy, regrettably wants to test a new weapon." The new weapon "the Katyusha Hunter," as the Israeli papers reported, is designed to destroy Katyusha rockets in the air. He claims that America asked its "advance base" in the Middle East, "nicknamed Israel" to test this new weapon. Israel, he claims, did not wait until this weapon arrived but provoked Hizballah by bombarding south Lebanon, forcing it to fire Katyusha rockets. He says that before the Americans, "currently the advocates of peace and previously cowboys" fulfilled their promise, Israel launched its aggression against Lebanon. The Bill Clinton Administration sent the new weapon before the end of the first day after the aggression began. This is why the United States refrained from criticizing Israel, he claims. He argues that despite the massive bombardment and air raids, the Lebanese government did not give in to the Israeli demand for disarming Hizballah.

In a 250-word column under the headline "Lessons of the Aggression" on page 20, 'Adil Dayf says that the Israeli aggression against Lebanon shows a number of facts, primarily that there are no doves and hawks in the ruling "military establishment" in Israel. All are ready to violate Arab land and space under the pretext of security. Peres, who brags that he is for peace, is "no less aggressive" than Ari'el Sharon and Menahmen Begin. It also shows that Israel will not halt its aggression against the Arabs even if it signs dozens of peace agreements. He urges the Arabs to close ranks to confront the "worst ruling clique" in Israel while clinging to peace based on justice.

LIBYAN FLIGHT TO MECCA DEFIES U.S. EMBARGO

A report from Tripoli under the headline "We Defy the Embargo and U.S. Terrorism," Hamdi Handal describes the takeoff of the Libyan airliner carrying Libyan pilgrims to Mecca. He says that the airliner flight gives a message to the world that Libya defies the aerial embargo imposed on it since 1992 and that it will not submit to U.S. will and the so-called U.S. terrorism. The flight, he says, also embodies the will of the Libyan people, who have been "crushed" by the international embargo imposed on Libya by the United States and Britain for refusing to hand over the defendants from the Lockerbie airliner crash.

MINISTER ALLOWS MOSQUE PREACHERS TO CHOOSE FRIDAY SERMONS

A 300-word unattributed report on page 2 notes that Awqaf Minister Mahmud Zaqzuq has positively responded to a call by 'AQIDATI Board Chairman Samir Rajab in his editorial in the latest issue. Rajab called for giving mosque preachers the freedom to choose the subject matter of their Friday sermons. The report notes that Dr. Zaqzuq also issued instructions to mosque preachers to consolidate the values of true Islam and to cope with the developments of the age.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Radio—'Arafat To Visit U.S. 30 Apr, To Meet Clinton, Peres

JN2904194596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat held talks with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa at his place of residence in al-Andalus Palace in Cairo this evening. Talks dealt with the political developments of the peace process following the amendment of the Palestinian national charter.

President 'Arafat will begin an official visit to the United States tomorrow. During the visit, he will hold separate talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres on the latest

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political developments in light of the imminent final-status negotiations which are slated for 4 May. The president will also give a political speech at a conference to be held in Washington on Middle East affairs.

President 'Arafat arrived in Cairo earlier today. He held talks with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak on the progress of the peace process on the Palestinian-Israeli track as well as issues of mutual concern.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat To Pay 'Official Visit' to U.S., Meet With Peres

TA2904141096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1230 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Egyptian President Husni Mubarak met at noon today in Cairo with Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasir 'Arafat to discuss the latest developments in the region in preparation for the final settlement talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

It was announced today that the PA chairman will depart for Washington either tonight or tomorrow morning in his first official visit to the United States. During the visit, Mr. 'Arafat will discuss with U.S. President Bill Clinton the coming stages of the Israeli-Palestinian talks.

'Arafat adviser Nabil Abu-Rudaynah said that Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, who is currently in Washington, will also meet with Mr. 'Arafat and that the PA chairman will deliver a speech to participants at a conference on the Middle East slated to be held in Washington.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Orders New Charter To Be Prepared

JN2904185896 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 29 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat issued a decree to start formulating a new Palestinian National Charter in implementation of the decision by the Palestine National Council in its recent session which convened in Gaza last week.

The Legislative Council's legal committee will implement this decision. The committee comprises several members of the new PLO Executive Committee and President Yasir 'Arafat's legal adviser.

Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th Discusses Israel, Hamas

BR2604125796 Brussels KNACK in Dutch 24-30 Apr 96 pp 140-145

[Interview with Nabil Sha'th, PA minister for international cooperation, by Sus Van Elzen in Brussels; date not given: "Running Around in a Circle — In Lebanon, Israel Is Waging War Again and it Is Blockading the Palestinian Areas, An Interview With Palestinian Minister Nabil Sha'th " — first paragraph is KNACK introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] While the Israeli action in Lebanon continues and the number of civilian victims has risen to over 100 (alone the shelling, probably by accident, of a refugee camp near Qana claimed more than 75 lives), a diplomatic circuit aimed at achieving a cease-fire has begun. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has been to Israel, Lebanon, and Damascus in an attempt to involve Syria in a new cease-fire, which, it is hoped, would immediately open the way toward new negotiations between the three parties. It appears that this is necessary in order to silence the Hizballah terrorist organization and the Israeli army. In the meantime Israel is allowing itself to be tempted into every more difficult positions — for example it is now demanding that the Palestinians change their charter before 7 May, otherwise negotiations with them will be stopped as well: If this is not a folly, then it is a dangerous precedent. Dr. Nabil Sha'th, the senior Palestinian negotiator and minister for international cooperation in the Palestinian Authority [PA], was in Brussels for a Palestinian donors meeting.

[Sha'th] At donor conferences meetings or ad hoc liaison committees, like the one we had here in Brussels, people do not come with new promises. After all, the scandal is that out of the $886 million which was promised in January, plus the $500 million owed from 1995, at present only $27 million has been paid. That scandal is not only the responsibility of the donors, it is also largely Israel's fault. After all since February Israel has prevented all donor committees and advisors from visiting the occupied territories in order to put together projects, and has kept all equipment from donors out of the occupied territories. It has succeeded in blocking the gifts. At the same time life itself was blockaded. We are under a total embargo. The world does not appear to understand that a total embargo is not something like the one which was imposed on Iraq. Or Libya, Cuba, or North Korea. No, Korea and Cuba have ships which come and go, and Libya is only prohibited from flying its planes. Iraq is not able to buy some things because it is not allowed to sell enough oil. But we are blockaded: The people cannot enter or leave, the fishermen are not

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allowed onto the sea, vegetables cannot be exported, cement can not be imported, nor medicines, nor flour....

It is as if life has stopped for a population of 2.5 million people and all to show to Shim'on Peres' electorate how hard and macho he is, and to impose a measure of collective punishment, with which, they think, they can get the Palestinians chasing Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] through the streets. But this kind of thing does not work that way. By imposing a total embargo on a people, all you do is drive it to extremes.

That is how the situation looks, and for that reason the committee meeting was not just about money, it was about survival. The Americans started to realize how seriously the Palestinian economy was endangered by all this, and wanted as a matter of urgency to see a kind of symbolic "photo session" organized with Dennis Ross, Uri Savir, and Sha'th, to let it be seen that we are once again busy with open negotiations. Because since those terrible events, the Israelis have in fact blocked all negotiations. And indeed, the Israelis have promised some things, the donors have said some things.... But there is no way out, unless the economic conditions of this peace process are thoroughly changed. The economic rules of the accord have been broken by Israel in such a way that it cannot just be written off as punishment.

As a prize for peace, the Israelis insisted that they get a total monopoly over the Palestinian market, a so-called "customs envelope." That means we cannot import anything unless it's via their channels and by their customs regulations. That is in the economic accord, which was drawn up in Paris, in parallel with the negotiations in Cairo. We accepted this envelope, unjust and unfair as it was, because the Israelis said this was the only way for them to be able to accept 120,000 Palestinian workers in Israel. They also said that they would buy Palestinian farm products and process them to Europe, that a full passage would run between Gaza and Jericho, and that the borders with Egypt and Jordan would be opened. But now the Israelis are blocking all these measures and they are stopping the workers. Therefore the only thing which is happening is that we are paying $500-$800 million in subsidies to the inefficient and marginal producers of Israel. We buy butter and cheese from the EU at four times the price. The butter comes from Israel, the dairy market there is extremely inefficient, therefore the Israelis simply put a 400 percent import tax on European butter: Add the transport on top of that and it is no longer worth the trouble, so we buy Israeli dairy products. You have these phenomena across the whole line. Cement. At the meeting they asked us how they can reduce the budget deficit of $160 million, which has been created by the closure. Those people sat there thinking really hard. Well. Ridiculous. We buy 2.8 million tonnes of cement in Israel. According to the agreement we should be able to buy that freely, but the Israelis insist that we are not allowed to do that. In Israel we pay them a minimum of $10 more than the price on the Mediterranean market. Therefore that makes millions of dollars which you do not have to do anything for!

We are forced to subsidize the Israeli economy at the same time as we are enclosed, so that they can put us under pressure whenever they want to. They are separating the West Bank from Gaza, therefore a kilo of tomatoes costs $0.10 in Gaza, and $1.5 on the West Bank. Ridiculous! It is unimaginable what the Israelis are doing to us, this has nothing to do with "security measures!" Therefore I have said OK, we are not asking for any new promises, we are only asking that the promises that have already been made be carried out. But the Israelis must take their hands from our necks.

[Van Elzen] Is there a motivation for this situation?

[Sha'th] Well, if you want to believe that at present Israel is able to allow 970 trucks a day through its own border at Gaza, and only nine trucks a day from Egypt, and that is connected with security, then you are rather naive. The trucks which go from Egypt to Gaza do not go to Israel: If they want to do that, they must be examined again. So why is it 100 times more difficult to allow trucks to go from Egypt to Gaza than to allow them to go from Israel to Gaza? Where is the security problem? Ridiculous. I am more than sick of the security argument, because I believe we are doing far more for the security of Israel than the Israelis are doing themselves.

The Israelis say, how is it that you are now arresting hundreds of Hamas people, and taking all their weapons, etc., when you could not do that before? I say to that: It was thanks to *your* agreement with Hamas, through which they received a seven-month cease-fire, in which no one was shot. Then you murdered their leaders, which gave them a pretext to break the cease-fire. But then, when Hamas started its terrible bomb attacks, we also took measures. I told them, *you* have allowed an Israeli fanatic to murder the best prime minister Israel every had, and then you put bodyguards around Peres for the first time. When we told you a million times that the Eyal people were going the kill him. Yasir 'Arafat himself in Frankfurt said this to Yitzhaq Rabin, while I was there, and Rabin said, ach.... Therefore as far as security measures are concerned, we are doing our best. What they are doing are not security measures, it is political pressure and economic exploitation.

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The economic agreement, which they are breaking on a massive scale, provided for three lists of products which did not fall under Israeli customs regulations, with the permitted quantities to be set in accordance with real consumption. Well, before we arrived the Israelis had practically prohibited building. So the total demand for cement for Gaza was 150,000 tonnes. Now that Gaza and the West Bank are under our authority, consumption has increased to 2.8 million tonnes, and they have not increased the permitted quantity, as agreed. Under the agreement we are allowed to import grain. But the permitted quantity was put at zero. Which means: To be decided later on the basis of actual consumption. It is still at zero. Even at the hunger period during the closure we were unable to import from Egypt the grain which was given to us.

The Netherlands is building a harbor for us. It has sent a large ship for drilling, setting probes, and testing. Six months ago the ship arrived in Cyprus with Israel's approval. They kept it in Cyprus for three months. Afterwards they let it come to Ashdod, where they wanted to search it before it came to Gaza. That was three months ago. Six months, for one Netherlands ship. We are paying for it, from Netherlands aid. They simply do not want us to have any way out to the world.

[Van Elzen] What impact is all this having on the peace process?

[Sha'th] The peace process is now at a standstill. Both on our track and the Syrian and Lebanese track. There are informal meetings, but de facto they have once again occupied the villages of the West Bank. They have delayed their withdrawal from Hebron provided for by the agreement. They have closed our borders and now allow only Israeli products through — because the Israeli producers made too much fuss. But note: No one is saying that this is the end of it. We all hope that meetings like the one in Brussels, and other efforts, will gradually push us in the direction of negotiations once again. We have not given up at all.

[Van Elzen] The peace process is said to now be entirely dominated by Peres' election in Israel.

[Sha'th] That is what Peres wants. And we are doing it: Our security actions, our calling of the Palestinian National Council to change the charter.... We are doing our best, but how far do you take something like that? Winning elections but destroying a country, and the peace process? There are limits after all. What can you do? Now Peres is proud that in five days he has allowed enough flour, sugar, and cooking oil into Gaza to eliminate the flour and bread lines. But is that a good description of progress in the peace process?

No, nothing is final in this world. Small countries which want to survive in a world market cannot allow themselves to give up to nihilism. Therefore I believe that we are both trying to eventually turn back to the peace process, in the knowledge that the Israelis will not do so before their elections. Until then we will only see symbolic gestures.

[Van Elzen] What do you think of the accusation against Iran, which is said to be behind the whole wave of terrorism?

[Sha'th] It is hypocritical. Election campaigning. Some 75 percent of the [Hamas'] money comes from the United States. Hamas has a very active network which collects money from the 6 million U.S. Muslims. They send it via Jordanian banks. The United States knows that. If they cannot stop that money, how can we stop the bombers?

Secondly Hamas' entire leadership is in the Jordanian capital Amman. All the instructions, messages, and inspiration come from there, even though the training probably takes place above all in Iran, and perhaps also in Syria, and Libya. Therefore OK, Iran will play a role, but things are not so straightforward that you can neatly blame Iran for everything.

[Van Elzen] Why is there suddenly so little question of Syria in this context?

[Sha'th] They have headquarters in Syria and Lebanon, and they are on the same wavelength as Hizballah as well. They probably have joint training. But once again, the leadership is not there. I will tell you why the leadership has to be in Amman. Because in all of the Middle East, only Jordan and Egypt have direct telephone connections and open borders with Israel and the West Bank. The Egyptians are safe and concerned about security, because they also have their own problems. Therefore from where are you going to send instructions, money, and arms? The longest open border is the Jordanian-Palestinian and Jordanian-Israeli border. If they cannot get across the Allenby border crossing due to the Palestinian police, then they still have the bridges to Israel north and south of the West Bank. And because Israel is very happy with the normalization with Jordan, every Jordanian can get an Israeli visa in 24 hours. Telephoning is automatic and direct: They cannot call Palestine from Syria, Lebanon or Iran. But Jordan is a very good ally of Israel and the United States, and they still believe that what is happening there is simply an expression of democracy and free speech. And as for the Hamas leadership: They are Jordanian citizens, and given that since time immemorial Jordan has been a democratic and free

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country..... We also know that hypocrisy is an accepted part of politics.

[Van Elzen] But why does Jordan tolerate all this, if it is such a good ally of Israel and such a good friend of Palestine?

[Sha'th] I think we are looking at diverging interests. I do not accuse the Jordanians of planning the murders in Jerusalem and Ashkelon. But if you take up with people like Hamas, then you must not be surprised when suddenly you get burned. It is the same problem throughout the entire world with extremists. Their leaders always find asylum somewhere, including Europe. It is always so easy to blame the weakest for terrorism. But where does Hamas get $75 million for its public institutions in Gaza alone?

The answer is that in many Muslim countries there is a custom of people giving money to Islamic humanitarian institutions — and that therefore in Gaza alone Hamas has institutions worth $75 million — mosques, kindergartens, schools, and nurseries. Can we ban good Muslims from giving money to other Muslims for a kindergarten, or to build a clinic? What we did after the bomb attacks was take over their mosques. We were able to do that, mosques do not have such large working costs, and they are not so tightly organized. We had enough preachers. Often they were young policemen who still had some difficultly with the Koran but things went OK. But we cannot just close this entire social infrastructure, and we simply do not have the money to take it over. Therefore we have a real problem, because that is where young people are indoctrinated from childhood onwards.

[Van Elzen] How do you imagine getting out of the impasse?

[Sha'th] With much patience, talking, and love.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas' Abu-Hamdan Condemns 'Arafat, Explains Strategy

BR2904134496 Madrid ABC in Spanish 29 Apr 96 p 32

[Interview with Abu-Hamdan, member of Hamas political executive committee, by Daniela Bianchi in Rome; date not given: "'Arafat Is a Criminal Acting as an Accomplice of the Enemy Against the Palestinians" — first two paragraphs are ABC introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian fundamentalist organization called the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) has condemned [Palestine Authority President] Yasir 'Arafat to death, believing he is guilty not only of having signed the peace agreements with Israel, but also of having revoked the clauses calling for the destruction of the Israeli state from the Palestinian National Charter. The conflict between 'Arafat's and Hamas' Palestinians has now become an all-out war.

The agreements reached in the past between the Palestine National Authority and the fundamentalist organization are now null and void. Abu-Hamdan explains Hamas' strategy without mincing his words.

[Bianchi] Hamas has promised further terrorist attacks along the lines of the latest suicide attacks carried out just over a month ago in Israel, and there is even talk about plans to kill Yasir 'Arafat....

[Abu-Hamdan] All our actions must be regarded in the context of our overall strategy, which aims at the complete liberation of Palestinian territory. For us nothing has changed and nothing will change as long as our territory continues to be occupied. It is our right and our duty to oppose occupation with all the means available. And anyone siding with the enemy becomes an enemy himself. In this case, we consider 'Arafat a criminal who is acting as an accomplice of the enemy against the Palestinian people's cause.

[Bianchi] However, the international community no longer regards your activities as a national liberation struggle, but rather as outright terrorism....

[Abu-Hamdan] I think the term "terrorism" is inappropriately used to refer to our activities. Is resistance against occupation a form of terrorism? Is demanding dignity a form of terrorism? In our view, terrorism is wanting to impose one's own ideas on others by force. This is what the Israelis are doing. I am convinced that the roots of terrorism in the Middle East must be looked for precisely in the Zionist regime's actions.

[Bianchi] What criteria does Hamas use to select its targets in Israel?

[Abu-Hamdan] Our movement's military wing, 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, chooses its targets among the occupying army's military institutions. Their destruction is the main objective of our military activity, given that they are the forces directly responsible for the repression of Palestinians and their struggle.

[Bianchi] But the victims of your actions include many civilians....

[Abu-Hamdan] The occupiers have always acted and targetted the civilian population. I am not speaking of the well-known massacres of defenseless Palestinians which have taken place from the times of Dayr Yasin to Sabra and Shatila [Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon], but above all of what is happening now in this period. Has the world already forgotten the

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killing perpetrated in the Hebron mosque, where 49 Palestinians were massacred while they were praying?

[Bianchi] When you speak of the Palestinians, are you also including that section of the population that does not profess the Islamic faith?

[Abu-Hamdan] Of course. All of Palestine's sons, independent of their allegiance to one religion or another, take an active part in the liberation struggle. Palestinians following the Christian faith have always fought against the Zionist enemy, and still do so. Bethlehem is experiencing the same occupation as Hebron or Gaza.

[Bianchi] What possibilities are there for dialogue?

[Abu-Hamdan] Dialogue with whom or for what? We do not believe there can be any dialogue if one of the sides is pointing a gun at the other's head. Hamas can accept dialogue only if the Zionists agree that they have occupied our land by violent means, and if they are prepared to return it to us.

[Bianchi] But 'Arafat has accepted dialogue....

[Abu-Hamdan] The peace agreements will never provide 'Arafat with the means to create an independent state on Palestinian land. Let us look realistically at what is happening in the territories which theoretically are under 'Arafat's control. Their police are forced to arrest Palestinians on a list supplied by the Zionist generals. In all the documents signed so far there is no mention of the Palestinian government or the Palestinian state, but only, more vaguely, of the Palestinians. In our opinion, this implies that they are a people who are living and will be forced to live within the framework of another state, namely the Israeli state.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Leader Says Time Not Right for Islamic State

TA2904132396 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 28 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by special AL-QUDS correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Rafah, Gaza — Shaykh Sayyid Abu-Musamih, a prominent Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leader, has said that in the current stage, he supports the establishment of a democratic state within the framework of which the people can resolve their differences.

This came in an exclusive AL-QUDS interview with Shaykh Abu-Musamih, who was released by the Palestinian Police two nights ago.

Shaykh Abu-Musamih said there is no room for demanding an Islamic state at present. He added that democracy creates a climate of freedom through which the popular will is realized by freedom of choice. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Abu-al-'Abbas—Way to Peace Open, 'We Must Change'

BR3004100896 Copenhagen POLITIKEN in Danish 29 Apr 96 p 9

[Interview with Muhammad 'Abbas by Hanne Foighel in Gaza; date not given: "The Reformed Terrorist — Abu-al-'Abbas Now Believes in Peace" — first paragraph is POLITIKEN introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] In 1985 Muhammad 'Abbas, commonly called Abu-al-'Abbas was the man behind the hijacking of the luxury liner, Achille Lauro, which was cruising in the Mediterranean. A group of his people shot and killed an elderly Jewish American passenger and threw him into the sea tied to his wheelchair. When the Achille Lauro entered port in Sicily the Italian authorities succeeded in "losing" Abu-al-'Abbas. He fled via what was then Yugoslavia and has spent the last 11 years in hiding in various places in the Arab world. Abu-al-'Abbas is a member of the Palestine National Council (PNC). We met with him in Gaza.

[Foighel] You have said that the hijacking of the Achille Lauro was a mistake.

['Abbas] There was nothing wrong with the idea itself, but some errors were made in its execution. The aim was to smuggle these fighters into Israel concealed on board. Things went wrong when they were discovered. We were fighting for our people's rights.

[Foighel] Are you sorry about what happened?

['Abbas] Yes. But the world has changed, not just me. Today the question about the rights of the Palestinian people is looked at in a different light and we must change too. We fought when the road to peace was blocked. Now it is open.

[Foighel] One U.S. attorney has asked Israel to extradite you to the United States or Italy to serve out your sentence.

['Abbas] So far nobody has asked for me. We are not engaged in the peace process for the sake of Israel or the United States. The United States should apologize to us for everything it has done against our people. Every era has its rules. If they want, peace we are partners for an all-embracing peace.

[Foighel] Are you afraid that Israel will extradite you?

['Abbas] I have come back after having watching developments over the last few years and I believe

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that this is the right way. I have been away from my fatherland for 50 years. If something forces me to leave again I promise that I will never forget my fatherland.

[Foighel] What are your plans now?

['Abbas] I want to stay in Palestine and help to ensure that all our people return to the fatherland. I also hope that it will one day be possible to visit Italy, but not to sit in jail there. ['Abbas ends]

On Wednesday [24 April] Abu-al-'Abbas voted to suspend the Palestinian Charter.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: PA, Israel Reportedly Reach Agreement on East Jerusalem

TA2904152896 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 26 Apr 96 p 5

[Report by Mu'in Wafa'i]

[FBIS Translated Text] Nicosia, QUDS PRESS — A Palestinian official who is very close to President Yasir 'Arafat has said that an agreement in principle has been reached between Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA] on the future of the eastern part of the occupied city of Jerusalem. This is the most controversial issue in the final talks between the two sides.

The official, who preferred to remain anonymous, told QUDS PRESS that the agreement will be announced after the results of the Israeli general elections, slated to be held on 29 May, are known. The official said that 'Arafat will announce the agreement after Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres overcomes the elections obstacle and the vacillation in Israeli public opinion. Moreover, 'Arafat will be able to make the announcement after having managed to amend the National Charter by abolishing the articles calling for Israel's destruction.

The Palestinian official refused to reveal the details of what has been agreed on between the two sides. He said, however, that the agreement, which was initially endorsed during 'Arafat's meeting with Peres last week at the Erez checkpoint, north of the Gaza Strip, includes the redeployment of Israeli forces in the al-Shaykh Jarrah area, al-'Ayzariyah, Shu'fat, Bayt Hanina — all of which are situated northeast of Jerusalem — and outside the Old City provided that all the doors of the Temple Mount are closed and only Stephen's Gate left open.

According to the Palestinian official, the agreement stipulates that the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher will be placed under Palestinian control, whereas that part of the Temple Mount which surrounds the Wailing Wall will come under Israeli control.

Jerusalem is one of the main sticking points in the final stage talks between the PA and Israel. The two sides had avoided discussion of Jerusalem during the interim stage agreements in view of their strong sensitivity about this issue.

The Palestinian official said that, in June, 'Arafat will announce the achievement with Israel of an acceptable formula on the future of Jerusalem, while the details and the timetable of the Israeli withdrawal will be agreed on during the final stage talks.

The Palestinian official refused to answer a question on whether Faysal al-Husayni, in charge of the Jerusalem file in the PA, is aware of the agreement, but he added that the "announcement of the agreement will explode like a bomb on the Arab and Israeli arenas." He stressed that "the Israeli and Palestinian sides need a calm period in order to prepare for the announcement of the agreement."

In recent months, right-wing Israeli circles had talked about secret negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis on Jerusalem sponsored by Minister Yosi Beilin, who is in charge of managing the talks with the Palestinian side. The Israeli Government denied this, however, and acknowledged that there had been meetings of an academic nature only.

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Algeria

Algeria: FIS' Haddam Criticizes Limited Consultations, Reports Shellings

MM2904114196 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 29 Apr 96 p 6

[Report by Muhammad Sadiq: "Haddam Concerned Over Limiting Consultations to Parties Accepting Current Situation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington — Anouar Haddam, head of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] Parliamentary Mission Abroad, has described Algerian President Liamine Zeroual's consultations with opposition figures and parties as "a known game the regime has been playing since the coup, especially when it is under international pressure. The aim is to [get them] to sign whatever it wants, and hence accuse the FIS of excluding itself."

He stressed his rejection of any solution that perpetuates the military's domination. He said that the talks and consultations are aimed at preserving this domination.

He revealed that helicopters are shelling opposition posts even in the capital's suburbs. He did not provide any evidence.

Haddam, who is in Washington, told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: "We would like to point to what the U.S. assistant secretary of state for Middle Eastern affairs said before the Senate on 16 April. He said that "words are not enough; actions are needed."

Haddam went on to say: "As we see it, the reality is that Algeria's foreign debts are increasing rapidly by the day."

The debts stand at present at $32 billion and are expected to reach $36 billion by the end of the year. Thus the attempt by some states such as the United States and France to reschedule these debts are designed to mortgage Algerian posterity, which has nothing to do with the issue, and also to perpetuate the military's domination.

Told that President Zeroual was elected through free elections and obtained 60 percent of the votes, Haddam said: We say, how can those who respect the election principle believe that the Algerian elections, which were held under a state of emergency and in the absence of any independent observation, were free?

Asked about the next steps to be taken by the regime, Haddam said: "The regime announced that it is seeking to hold a broadly based meeting with everyone or with those who are willing to sign the regime's known scheme, namely to continue to tighten the military's grip around the Algerian political stage. This is the crux of the Algerian problem.

On his view of a solution, Haddam said: We stress once again the FIS' position of securing a comprehensive political solution. This has been reiterated by FIS leader Shaykh Abassi Madani, his deputy Shaykh Ali Belhadj, and the national executive bureau inside Algeria. Because the main aspects of the Algerian crisis should be addressed first.

We in the FIS would give our blessing to any solution based on respecting these principles, that is the principles stipulated in the national covenant: respect for the people's choice, party pluralism, rotation of power through free elections, and the Army's noninterference in political affairs.

Algeria: FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter

MS2904134596 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 23 Apr 96

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria," published by Islamic Salvation Front "supporters in Europe" — quotation marks as received; double parentheses denote source's use of brackets; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

The Hajj: Symbol of how the Ummah should be!

Praise be to Allah Who Says: "Behold! We pointed the site, to Ibrahim, of the (sacred) House, (saying) "Associate not anything (in worship) with Me; And sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or stand up, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer).

And proclaim the Pilgrimage Among men: they will come to you on foot and (mounted) on every camel lean (on account of journeys) through deep and distant mountain highways." ((Koran surat Al Hajj, 22: 26-27, Translation into English: Yusuf Ali)).

Following the call of the prophet Ibrahim (p.b.u.h) [praise be upon him], millions of Muslims accomplish each year the pilgrimage to Makka El Mukarama. The rites associated with the pilgrimage are uniformly fulfilled at prescribed time and space. Beside the spiritual act by which the Muslim says "O! Allah here I am", the Unity of the Ummah is highlighted by the condition put on the dress itself during the Ihram. All pilgrims wear a long piece of seamless cloth to cover the upper of the body, and a wrapper to cover the lower part. In the uniformity of this basic dressing, all apparent social differences are temporary wiped out and pilgrims from all

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walks of life, from all trades and classes, and from every corner of the globe, assemble at Mecca in response to the call of Allah. They dress in the same simple way, observe the same regulations, utter the same supplications at the same time in the same way, for the same end. There is no royalty, but loyalty of all to Allah. Seeing the pilgrims circling the Kaaba or standing in the plain of Arafa for example, one can not help meditate on the day of Judgement when each one will stand with his deeds as his only belongings.

What a sad feeling when the Hajj is finished and the "hajji" goes back home and looks at the state of the Ummah consumed by excessive partition and where antagonism, quarrels and internal wars are just a few of the symptoms of a deadly disease called "going astray from the right path". Unity is the strength and the Ummah does not exist without Islam.

While the Hajji is circling the Kabaa the Israelis war planes are circling Lebanon shedding indiscriminately blood of children, elderly men and women, Muslims and Christians. Concentrating on Hajj is hard when one knows that Israel can even bombard United Nations camp using shells fitted with M732 radar fuses which detonate them at 7 meters off the ground, the most lethal possible height according to experts.The detonations are followed by blasting downwards to amputate, maim and kill. What a "civilised way" to conduct a war when one has the supreme military superiority!!! What is the International reaction to that? Concretely, the Hajji will learn that the third round of the "anti-terrorism" conference which started in Charm el-Cheikh (Egypt), and which was due to take place in Brussels, was postponed.

Then the Hajji may ask the pertinent question of why. Is it not terrorism an immoral issue that should be dealt with under any circumstances? So what the Israelis aggression against Lebanon has got to do with the issue so as to cause the postponement of the conference?

It will not take the hajji long time to figure out that the definition of "terrorism" adopted by some is a very selective one and that "double standard attitude" in dealing with international issues is the norm and not the exception. The Ummah actions or reactions are always put on the "wrong scale" as far as Israel is concerned and no matter what!

May Allah accept the prayers of the Hajjis and all the sincere believers. Amin!

Thought of El Eid To the families of the brothers martyred in the battlefield for the Muslim dignity, for our brothers and sisters in the oppressors jails and torture centres, to their families, to all the oppressed Muslims everywhere: Eid Mubarak!

Lebanon from an eyewitness!

Following are two articles published in the British newspaper "THE INDEPENDENT" and written by Robert Fisk who is actually in Lebanon witnessing from close and live. The first article is from the 19/04/96 issue while the second is dated the 23/04/96:

Massacre in sanctuary!

Qana, southern Lebanon — It was a massacre. Not since Sabrah and Chatila had I seen the innocent slaughtered like this. The Lebanese refugee women and children and men lay in heaps, their hands or arms or legs missing, beheaded or disembowelled. There were well over a hundred of them. A baby lay without a head. The Israeli shells had scythed through them as they lay in the United Nations shelter, believing that they were safe under the world's protection. Like the Muslims of Srebrenica, the Muslims of Qana were wrong.

In front of a burning building of the UN's Fijian battalion headquarters, a girl held a corpse in her arms, the body of a grey-haired man whose eyes were staring at her, and she rocked the corpse back and forth in her arms, keening and weeping and crying the same words over and over: "My father, my father." A Fijian UN soldier stood amid a sea of bodies and, without saying a word, held aloft the body of a headless child.

"The Israelis have just told us they'll stop shelling the area," a UN soldier said, shaking with anger. "Are we supposed to thank them?" In the remains of a burning building — the conference room of the Fijian UN headquarters — a pile of corpses was burning. The roof had crashed in flames onto their bodies, cremating them in front of my eyes. When I walked towards them, I slipped on a human hand.

Israel's slaughter of civilians in this terrible 10-day offensive — 206 by last night — has been so cavalier, so ferocious, that not a Lebanese will forgive this massacre. There had been the ambulance attacked on Saturday, the sisters killed in Yohmor the day before, the 2-year-old girl decapitated by an Israeli missile four days ago. And earlier yesterday, the Israelis had slaughtered a family of 12 — the youngest was a four-day-old baby — when Israeli helicopter pilots fired missiles into their home.

Shortly afterwards, three Israeli jets dropped bombs only 250 metres from a UN convoy on which I was travelling, blasting a house 30 feet into the air in front of my eyes. Travelling back to Beirut to file my report on the Qana massacre to the Independent last night, I found

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two Israeli gunboats firing at the civilian cars on the river bridge north of Sidon.

Every foreign army comes to grief in Lebanon. The Sabrah and Chatila massacre of Palestinians by Israel's militia allies in 1982 doomed Israel's 1982 invasion. Now the Israelis are stained again by the bloodbath at Qana, the scruffy little Lebanese hill town where the Lebanese believe Jesus turned water into wine.

The Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres may now wish to end this war. But the Hizballah are not likely to let him. Israel is back in the Lebanese quagmire. Nor will the Arab world forget yesterday'a terrible scenes.

The blood of all the refugees ran quite literally in streams from the shell-smashed UN compound restaurant in which the Shiite Muslims from the hill villages of southern Lebanon — who had heeded Israel's order to leave their homes — had pathetically sought shelter. Fijian and French soldiers heaved another group of dead — they lay with their arms tightly wrapped around each other — into blankets.

A French UN trooper muttered oaths to himself as he opened a bag in which he was dropping feet, fingers, pieces of people's arms.

And as we walked through this obscenity, a swarm of people burst into the compound. They had driven in wild convoys down from Tyre and began to pull the blankets off the mutilated corpses of their mothers and sons and daughters and to shriek "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great") and to threaten the UN troops.

We had suddenly become not UN troops and journalists but Westerners, Israel's allies, an object of hatred and venom. One bearded man with fierce eyes stared at us, his face dark with fury. "You are Americans," he screamed at us. "Americans are dogs. You did this. Americans are dogs."

President Bill Clinton has allied himself with Israel in its war against "terrorism" and the Lebanese, in their grief, had not forgotten this. Israel's official expression of sorrow was rubbing salt in their wounds. "I would like to be made into a bomb and blow myself up amid the Israelis," one old man said.

As for the Hizballah, which has repeatedly promised that Israelis will pay for their killing of Lebanese civilians, its revenge cannot be long in coming. Operation Grapes of Wrath may then turn out then to be all too aptly named.

Lebanese Muslims and Christians are at one with guerrillas!

To understand how the Lebanese felt, you had to watch the car which drove down Baalbek Street yesterday with four large yellow and green Hizballah flags-complete with the word "Allah" and a hand holding a Kalashnikov rifle-flapping above it from make-shift flagpoles.

On the bonnet and boot, there were two equally large glass boxes half filled with paper currency. "Give for the Islamic Resistance", was hand -written on the side. and out of shops and houses, men and women — well-dressed, many of them middle class and very definitely not religious fanatics — walked, unsmiling, to put money in the boxes.

Never before have such scenes been witnessed on the streets of Beirut. Previously despised by many Lebanese — specially those who re not of the Shia Muslim faith — the Hizballah has, thanks to Israel, suddenly come of age. The Israeli offensive against civilians — which continued yesterday when an Israeli gunboat fired at an ambulance on the coastal highway north of Sidon, causing the driver to lose control and badly injure a pedestrian — has united Muslims and Christians in almost unprecedented fury. In both Muslim and Christian area of Beirut, the Lebanese have tied black ribbons to their car radio aerials in memory of the 110 civilians slaughtered by the Israelis in the UN compound at Qana. Outside mosques, clerics have pasted photographs of the bloodbath and prayers for the dead. A national day of mourning yesterday closed down shops, banks and government buildings across the country while at midday, many Lebanese observed a minute's silence in memory of the 200 or so civilians killed by the Israelis. They include, of course, not only the men,women and children of Qana but a four-day-old baby killed with 11 members of her family by an Israeli helicopter attack on her home in Nabatea,three children and two women in an ambulance that was deliberately targeted by another Israeli helicopter pilot in southern Lebanon, a two-year-old girl decapitated by an Israeli missile in Beirut and three sisters cut down by Israeli shells in the southern Bekaa. Only eight Hizballah guerrillas are believed to have died.

Nor has the Christian community — traditionally friendly to the West and once allies of the Israelis — been spared. An elderly Christian Maronite was killed when an Israeli air raid inexplicably struck this totally Christian village in the Bakaa, while two Christian Maronite Lebanese army soldiers were killed by an Israeli helicopter pilot in southern Lebanon. The soldiers were driving near Tibnin when their car was chased by the Helicopter. The two men jumped from

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their vehicle, waving their arms and pointing to their US-made uniforms, then ran into a house for protection. The Israeli pilot then fired a laser-guided missile into the building, killing them both.

Almost equally shocking for the Christian community was the sabotage attack by the Israelis on two of Lebanon's main power stations, both in Christian Maronite areas where no Hizballah would ever dare to visit. The power cuts — the country now only receives six hours of electricity a day — affect Muslims and Christians equally. It was only because of a Lebanese government prohibition that Christian students dressed in black were prevented from staging a demonstration outside the US embassy in east Beirut to mark "the end of the New World Order".

Not a Lebanese believes that the Qana massacre was an accident. "I used to hate the Hizballah," a student of hotel management told me yesterday, his voice steadily rising in anger. "But now I admire them. They are the only guys with the guts to stand up to the Israelis and keep shooting. Not even the Palestinians did that. They say that Peres had to do this in order to win the election. And the Americans say there will only be a Middle East peace if Peres wins the election. So you mean all this is for peace? You mean that Peres has to slaughter all these people to win the election and save peace? We Lebanese have to die for your peace." Alone in its optimism, the opposition newspaper "Al Diyar" predicted that the birth of a new and united Lebanon would follow the latest Israeli onslaught. "The [Israeli] strick is targeting all of Lebanon," the paper said. "No better show of national unity have we ever witnessed." But other papers emphasised the supine response of other Arab nations and the failure of the US to condemn the savagery of the Israeli attacks.

In the streets of Beirut, Westerners — even those who have lived here many years — are receiving the kind of quizzical, suspicious glances from old acquaintances and scarcely suppressed hostility from strangers that symbolises the depth of animosity again growing towards the West. Newspaper cartoons invariably link America with Israel's onslaught. One of them showed Mr Peres harvesting the "Grapes of Wrath" after which the current operation is so shamefully named. Each grape is a human skull.

Algeria: More than 1000 death sentence and the legitimate struggle continues!

According to an annual report by the Geneva-based Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers (CIJL),23 judges and lawyers were killed last year while carrying out their professional duties, 4 are still missing and 36 were tortured.

In the report presented to the UN Commission on Human Rights, CIJL painted a black picture of the state of justice in 51 countries where 337 jurists suffered reprisal attacks because of their professional activities.

Since the military coup d'Etat of January 1992, Algeria has been occupying one of the leading positions amongst "non-Etat de Droit" countries ("non-State of Right").

According to Western sources, more than 1,000 Islamic militants have been sentenced to death, mostly in absentia, by special courts set up by the military regime. These courts have been denounced by human rights organisations on the basic that "they lack of the strict minimum conditions for a civilised trial". After the execution of many people rapidly sentenced to death well in advance of their "trial", the military regime bowed to external pressure and scrapped the sinister courts few months ago. However, the morbid job of these "special courts" was transferred to other courts with the respectable name of ordinary "criminal courts".

Nevertheless Injustice is still prevailing as 16 people were sentenced to death in absentia last week by the tribunal of Medea on the accusation of belonging to a group of armed islamists.

The annual report of the CIJL says that "in Algeria many lawyerscomplain that the government often interferes with the judiciary and undermines its independence. Accusations have been made that the government dictates verdicts to the judges who are under a constant threat of dismissal by the government".

A look at the military regime improvisation in the economy!

The military regime government in Algeria is in deep financial crisis. It has taken prime minister Ouyahyia a long time to be able to somehow present a "budget" for 1996 as all of Algerian financial sources have been "dried up" to sustain a war which the military Generals thought will only last few days back in January 1992.

The military Generals "hands" have apparently left no option for Mr Ouyahyia to avoid a total paralysis of his government administrative and economic sectors, except to "racket" the Algerian people who are already suffering greatly from the effect of the coup d'Etat in all aspects.

This "official racketting" campaign is actually played on two fronts. One is to direct the much needed funds to the near-empty public treasury and the other one is to prepare the public opinion for a quick sell out of state companies. A privatisation process of which the authorities issue from the coup d'Etat of January 92 will

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have a complete control in defining the rules, selecting the buyers and setting the prices (probably "symbolic" again!) and all this under a state of emergency!!!

They have started to "hit" the construction sectors by not paying the workers wages for more than a year projecting an illusion that this sector is generating losses such that the public treasury is tired of "fishing it out" each time. The reality is totally different. Everyone who knows about the "astronomical" demand in that sector as far as just the housing deficit is concerned will know as a manager put it, that:"working with your feet and being blind will not prevent you from making good money!". In reality that sector is experiencing a cash flow problem caused by (mis) managers (who are in charge of implementing a market economy today!) whose speech has changed to that of "supply and demand" but their behaviour is still typical of that same "old good collectivism" where everything belongs to everyone and no one has a thing except the Nomenklatura. Talking to managers in the construction sector, one will learn that most of the work they have done and delivered was for a ministry or a state company and they are waiting to get their money back. They sure have been waiting for a long time. So why targeting this sector first (the state hotels which nobody wants to buy except with a "symbolic dinar" is another story.)? It seems that the actual market conditions in that sector give it a fast and high rate of return while being characterised by a low level investment. It is an ideal sector for "money laundering" because ordinary Algerian entrepreneurs who are not "protected" against the bureaucrats bribery, will surely not venture in buying such companies as the overheads will "push them to red" for eternity. As far as foreign take overs are concerned, hydrocarbon sectors with strong foreign states guaranties remain about the only sector available today despite the signatures here and there of "investment assurance" agreements between the military regime and few other governments. The "security parameter" still carries a heavy weight in the investment equation on the top of the fact that Algerian non-hydrocarbon industry is all based in the north of the country where the war has mainly been concentrated so far.

In pursuing of its "racketting" policy, Mr Ouyahyia's government turned to the private sector trying to "squeeze" more money on the pretext of "taxes are not paid correctly to the government and there is a lot of tax evasion". All of this on a background of "promoting privatisation" paradoxically.

It seems that the real entrepreneurs are targeted to weak them down in order to make place for the future "winners of state companies gave away". Mr Ouyahyia government probably think that the Algerian public opinion is ready to not only ask, but also request the selling of state companies as if it is the people's own idea. The image, the propaganda wants to engrave in the collective "subconscious" is not only that of the state companies have just been losing "public" money but also that the sole responsible for this "irreversible" condition, are the managers who have been "dilapidating" their resources. But thanks to "Sheriff" Ouyahyia who came few weeks ago on his big horse and caught them all except one who was saved allegedly in the last minute by Mr Ouyahyia's predecessor according to an Algerian newspaper.

Two weeks ago, Mr Makhloufi, the industry and mines minister, has announced that prices of electricity, fuel and natural gas are to go up soon. According to Mr Makhloufi, these increases had been decided in order to: "offset the deficit of the distribution companies, combat waste and make citizens take part in the investment effort the energy sector had started". From this statement one can see the coming back of "la langue de bois" of the seventies when talking about "waste" as if the Algerian people are some kind of pyromaniacs who, whenever they acquire some money they go directly to a petrol station and buy some "very cheap" petrol to burn for the fun of it. In comparaison with other countries, the price of natural gas and petrol are very expensive in Algeria given its status of big producer.

When Mr Makhloufi talks about "deficit of the distribution companies" it is the same "psychological campaign" unproved by real figures in order to prepare the opinion to accept the coming operation of selling the electricity, gas and water transport without the slightest talk about the consequences this will have on the public. Only the "rosy colours" are allowed to be talked about. As for the third pretext of "racketting", Mr Makhloufi invokes "making citizens take part in the investment effort". Talking about "dictatorship" existing only in the domain of politics!! This "economy dictator" did not say if these compulsory investors will have a part of ownership and profit or not? Or is it just the State, as defined in their mystic and abstract notion, which will always be the sole owner? The dictatorship of those self-proclaimed super-Algerians have always hid behind their distorted notion of State in order to do as they please and to defend themselves against the Algerian people. Even torturers of the secret police, la S.M are convinced that they are defending the "State". Many victims will hear them saying in the torture centres:"here you are in the heart of the "State"!". People vote freely, make their choices and the self-proclaimed super-Algerians step in, throw the ballot boxes in the dustbins in order to save the Algerian "State" from the Algerian people. Here is a president of an "unelected" parliament set up by the

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pushiests, who talk in the name of the "State" because he can not talk in the name of the Algerian people. Here is the prime minister Ouyahyia in order to make his "budget"accepted says that "it is derived from the program of the "state" (and adds without laughing) which has been approved by the (now heroic) Algerian people". A couple of days ago Mr Benachenou, the minister of "restructuring" said the "state" has the freedom and the right to sell "State" companies. He was very short of adding to the Algerian people: "and it has nothing to do with you, so mind your own business!". This is their conception of the "State". One can rightly question the assumptions that these (mis) managers mission is to move Algeria toward market economy and not to find cash for their sponsors from whatever sources and doing whatever it takes. One is also curious to know how accurate the IMF and the WB monitoring of the Algerian economical situation is, given the faithful echoes these organisations have tendency to make about the "wonderful and miraculous economical results, Algiers always releases. Knowing for example how selective and picky are the "economists" in Algiers when it come to chose a "representative" sample from which macro-economical indices such as inflation, are calculated, one has a strong reservation about any figures that comes out of the military regime "artificial statistics factory". Then on the other hand the military regime under these conditions considers economics figures as a tool for psychological war and this explain partly the discrepancy between the real market which Algerian people can touch and feel (the heat!) and the fantasist figures one hear of once in while. If the first one is the real barometer of the economy the second is a fake and altered instrument. This does not explain the faithfull echoing of the international financial organisations and makes it more difficult to identify the already unclear boundary between economical aid and political support!

The human factor is essential in every economical plan or strategy and more so wherever there is absence of freedom of expression and representation. This has been an essential critics of the IMF "cure" to many countries. Many are convinced that a same system can not pretend to deliver one thing during the last three past decades and the opposite today. Following is an illustration of how difficult it is for the old reflexes to die out, that is if the persons concerned are willing to change, but in the case of them just pretending then what a seismic catastrophe is waiting Algeria: An easing in bureaucratic procedures to obtain licence from the government, has motivated many young ex-"hitists" (unemployed people) to enter the urban public transport business, last year. Usually a handful of them get together, borrow money or whatever, buy a small van, take it to a mechanic, transform it into a small public transport vehicle and there they went into business. Reports from Algeria state that these "entrepreneurs" were so successful and have improved the quality of the service greatly so that each one of these business ended up with its "own clients". These clients were more than satisfied because they were picked up very near home at a precise time and pick up from work or a learning institution up to a point where parents reached a degree of trusting these "future of Algeria" and sending their boys and girls to school without the need to accompany with them. The drivers will make sure they get into the school before leaving. Another thing which has helped in their success and which has probably annoyed "lazy "politicians" and bureaucrats", is that these young people have listen to the wish of their clients and decided to have separate transport for men and women. Few days ago, the " Viva market economy" government has decided not to renew their licences.

On the false grounds that a state transport company has complain about these young "insolent" stealing it clients. The clients and the young "entrepreneurs" have decided to protest TOGETHER! This summarises post-Independence Algeria where anything that is "good" for the people is taken as "bad" for the "government" and where the Nomenklatura will always have her nose where money is saying: "I eat or there will be no game!".

Indeed, it can very well be predicted the fact that those, who have spent most of their (mis) managerial career dancing under Karl Marx music, will step on their feet when they try or are forced to switch to the music of Adam Smith. The only remaining uncertainty stays on the exact time of their inevitable falling to the ground.

Egypt

Egypt: 'Arafat Departs for Washington After 1-Day Visit; al-Baz Comments

NC3004073796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0620 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Apr (MENA) — Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat left Cairo for Washington this morning after a one-day visit. During the visit he was received by President Husni Mubarak, and they discussed the latest developments in the region. They also discussed the peace process, especially on the Palestinian track and arrangements for the final-phase negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel. They also reviewed the future concept of the peace process after the cease-fire agreement in Lebanon and the Palestine National Council meeting.

President 'Arafat was seen off at the airport by Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first foreign ministry under secretary

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and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, and Palestine's Ambassador in Cairo Zuhdi al-Qidrah.

Dr. al-Baz made a statement after President 'Arafat's departure. He expressed his belief that the outstanding points in the Oslo Accord concerning the transfer of remaining powers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli forces' withdrawal from Hebron will be implemented. He said negotiations on the final phase will begin early next week.

Al-Baz expressed his hope that the Arab region will see a period of calm, that it will not resort to violence, and that it will be able to deal with the negative, destructive results of violence that took place in the last few weeks.

Egypt: Islamic Group Urges 'Retaliation' Against Israel 'Anywhere'

MM2904114596 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 27 Apr 96 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Islamic Group in Egypt Calls For Israeli Interests To Be Hit"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, AL-HAYAH — The Islamic Group in Egypt has urged its members to hit Israeli targets anywhere in retaliation to the aggression against Lebanon.

The group issued a statement yesterday entitled "Hit Israel," of which AL-HAYAH has obtained a copy. Addressing Israel, it said: "Do as you please and continue to wreak havoc...launch your strikes to wake all the sleeping and the dead." It wondered: "Where are those who met at Sharm al-Shaykh? Or was that aimed at paving the way for what the Jews are doing now?" The statement added: "O Islamic nation...the Koran nation...rise up. The time has come for the nation not to accept any alternative to the jihad...by God, we will ruin your life and give you sleepless nights...you will enjoy no sleep or stability." [passage omitted]

Egypt: Paper—U.S.-Israeli Accord Raises Doubts on Peace Intentions

NC3004063596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0503 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Apr (MENA) — AL-JUMHURIYAH newspaper says the accord the United States signed with Israel following the cease-fire agreement in southern Lebanon that guarantees military superiority for Israel over all Arab countries raises doubts in the two countries' intentions to introduce peace in a region that has been witnessing wars and conflicts for more than 40 years.

In its editorial today, the paper asks if the United States and Israel are advocating peace, why then does the United States extend all this aid to Israel while it exerts immense efforts against some weapons suppliers, such as North Korea, to discourage them from supplying the Arab countries with weapons.

The paper emphasizes that peace can never materialize in light of Israel's great and dangerous military superiority over all its neighbors. The paper clarifies that it is this disorder that prompts Israel to go to extremes in its acts of aggression.

The paper asks the Arab countries to do all they can to remedy the current disorder in the military area between them and Israel.

Libya

Libya: 'Militant Islamic Group' Claims Clashes Continuing

MM2904133096 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 27 Apr 96 p 6

[Unattributed report: "Libyan Islamic Group: Clashes Still Continuing"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, AL-HAYAH — The Militant Islamic Group [al-jama'ah al-islamiyah al-muqatilah] in Libya has issued an addition to its statement No. 5, stressing that clashes with Libyan security forces are continuing. The statement included a map of the battlefield in Wadi al-Injil in east Libya, in addition to a copy of the identity card of Colonel Salih al-Bur'usi of the security forces, "who was killed in the same battle and was buried in al-Bayda' with two others." [passage omitted]

The statement stressed that "the fighting is still continuing, there are clashes every day, and the most recent military operation was the attack launched by the mujahidin against the police station in Ra's al-Hilal, where they succeeded in storming the station and seizing weapons; the police surrendered without any resistance. In a similar operation, the police station in al-Qubbah was stormed. None of the police were killed in either operation, for special reasons." [passage omitted]

Sudan

Sudan: Foreign Minister Criticizes 'Hasty' UN Resolution

EA2904124996 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Mustafa Uthman Isma'il, the minister of state in the Foreign Ministry, was yesterday

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sworn in at the Republic palace before Major General al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, the first vice president of the Republic, and the deputy chief justice.

Following the swearing-in ceremony, Dr. Mustafa Uthman Isma'il told our correspondent that [UN] Resolution Number 1054 adopted by the UN Security Council last Saturday [27 April] was hasty. He stressed that some powers in the Security Council had sought to settle their scores with Sudan by imposing their hegemony on the council.

He said that a committee had been set up to conduct necessary studies on the implications of the resolution on the country in general and diplomatic missions abroad in particular. He added that the committee would submit its findings to the concerned authorities before the end of the blessed 'Id al-Adha.

Dr. Mustafa made it clear that the Foreign Ministry would monitor the reactions of different countries to Resolution Number 1054, saying that Sudan would, at the same time, deal with those countries in accordance with the law and [international] conventions in a manner that would protect Sudan's security and secure its citizens' honor. His excellency went on to say that there would be an extensive diplomatic campaign in the coming period both among the countries that voted for and against the resolution aimed at explaining Sudan's views on the matter.

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Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: 'Harsh Trade Measures' Planned Against UK Over Dissident

MM2904140396 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 27-28 Apr 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Saudi Arabia Seeking To Impose 'Gulf Sanctions' on Britain Because of al-Mas'ari"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London — The Saudi Government has begun to discuss harsh trade measures against Britain in protest of its decision to grant dissident Dr. Muhammad al-Mas'ari the right to stay for four years.

Diplomatic sources have told AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI that Riyadh has drawn up an integrated program based on calm gradual steps to apply the sanctions against London, while securing a suitable cover in every deal to dissociate itself from any political suspicion.

The sources said that "numerous British companies have already decided not to compete in any Saudi invitation to submit bids, because they know the outcome beforehand. But it seems that the new measures are aimed at excluding them completely from the huge competition the Kingdom represents regionally or internationally."

The sources added that "there is also an intention to use some Gulf states, such as Bahrain, which is complaining about London's decision to shelter some of its opponents, and the United Arab Emirates, whose defense project with the UK is still faltering. This confirms that competition over the huge aircraft deal being discussed is effectively limited to the United States and France, which is bound to Abu Dhabi by a joint defense agreement." [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Interior Minister Congratulates Security Forces on Hajj

LD2904203596 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1555 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Mena, 29 Apr (SPA) — His Royal Highness Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz [Al-Sa'ud], the interior minister, thanked and expressed his appreciation to the commanders and men of the security forces who served and are still serving the pilgrims to God's Holy House — be they cadres of the Interior Ministry or of the National Guard or the Armed Forces — for their successful efforts.

He also thanked all the government cadres who carried out their duties towards the pilgrims.

This came in an address made by his highness during a reception yesterday at the Interior Ministry at al-Aziziyyah in Mecca for the directors of the security sector in the Interior Ministry, who took part in the comprehensive plan for the 1416 AH [1996] hajj.

The following is the text of HRH prince Nayif Bin Abd al-Aziz's speech: Headline: Interior Minister Praises Efforts of Security Forces During Pilgrimage.

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God. May God's prayers and peace be upon the most honorable messengers and prophets, [Prophet Mohammad].

Dear brothers. I congratulate you all on the occasion of the blessed 'Id al-Adha and thank you all, especially the leaders of the security sectors and those who participated in maintaining security during this pilgrimage, members of the National Guard, and Armed Forces. They were prepared forces ready to support you and you all shared responsibility in carrying out the duties.

I also thank all the state organs which contributed and participated in carrying out the duties towards the pilgrims of God's holy house, [Mecca]. [passage omitted] You implemented the security plans which you had devised after a thorough study. Your planning was very good and you excelled in its implementation and God will reward you for serving the pilgrims to God's House and the security of this country. [passage omitted]

We thank God and ask you to convey my thanks and those of my brother's the deputy interior minister, Prince Ahmad, to the security men and the National Guard and those who took part in the Armed Forces and the general intelligence.

May God help you in your efforts and make you successful in the remaining [hajj] days.

Brothers: What you have done is a great accomplishment which does not exist in any country in the world. This is an honor for you, and it is God's will that you have borne this responsibility and fulfilled the valuable trust which was expected of you by my masters the custodian of the two holy mosques and his highness the second deputy [prime minister] and proved that you are worthy of the responsibility and the trust, praise be to God.

This accomplishment was preceded by others not so long ago, including the uncovering of the smuggling of explosives which we all know about. That was achieved by the grace of God and the efforts of customs and security officers.

God willing, whoever wants to harm this country will be defeated.

The great accomplishment was the unmasking and capturing of the criminals who perpetrated a capital crime

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against their homeland and nation. However, praise be to God, your brothers of the criminal investigation [department] succeeded first by relying on God and then on their owns efforts.

This was an extremely great accomplishment which, thanks be to God, was greatly appreciated by our leadership and citizens in this dear homeland. [passage omitted]

What I would recommend to you and to myself is that we should not let ourselves be prone to arrogance and boasting because the ego is prone to evil.

What is required of you is not for a specific period but continuous. We must also be aware that we are not isolated from the world but we are a part of the world. However, I could say that our religion and our homeland are being targeted but we rely first on God and then on our wise leadership, our citizens, and on you. We shall continue at this level, God willing.

What happened could happen again, or on a bigger or smaller scale. This exists in the whole world and we must not deny the occurrence of that for the reasons I mentioned.

Myself and my brother, His Highness Prince Ahmad Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz share the responsibility with you and we will not spare any effort in supporting you. You are aware that there is trust first in God and then in you and that trust will forever be there because you deserve it. [passage omitted]

What you have heard or read in Saudi newspapers about the feelings of the perpetrators' families may be a source of pride for us. They have overcome their family sentiments and offered their loyalty to their religion and their love to their homeland and they have demanded the harshest punishment for the perpetrators. Brothers; as you know, your country is being targeted, and, thanks to the sound directives of our leadership, the state has been discharging its duty and will continue to do so in confronting these ideas which are alien to both our religion and our country.

Brothers: You will agree with me in saying that our country is like a pool of clear, potable water in which clean and pure streams of water converge. This clear, potable water has been soiled and what is required now is to clean up this water so that it may revert to its initial purity. In this respect, our virtuous religious scholars, the competent services of the state, and our writers should assume the responsibility of facing up to this idea [fundamentalism] which is alien to our religion and country. For this is an invasion of ideas which can be removed only by means of countering ideas.

We must preserve the clean and pure nature of our creed which emanates from the holy book of God, and from the traditions set by the prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him, his al-Rashidin [first four Caliphs] successors, and their followers. [passage omitted]

God protect us from evil Brothers: I pray to God Almighty to protect us from the evil in us and from the devil and from those who harbour evil. May God defeat those who wish this religion [Islam] and homeland [Saudi Arabia] evil, God willing. May God make their schemes the source of their destruction. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Bombers' Actions Said Attributable to 'Alien' Influences

LD2704083796 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2130 GMT 26 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 26 Apr (SPA) — The SPA social affairs editor has written the following commentary:

Social scientists have agreed that it is possible to attribute any misbehavior or good behavior to various factors, some of them imported from outside the social environment and the others from within that environment. [passage omitted]

The four youths who committed the bombing in Ulayya, in Riyadh, strayed from the right path of the code of conduct in which they were brought up and from their society by following this imported and alien behavior.

It is possible, then, to attribute the four youths' criminal behavior to foreign factors secreted by a sick and alien society which imposed on them its perennial illnesses and made them forget about God; and thus they forgot their original roots.

It would have been normal for these youths to have enthusiastically joined their fellow countrymen in contributing to the advancement of Saudi Arabia, had it not been for those alien and imported factors. Exceptionally, however, these misled youths allowed themselves to be an easy tool of destruction and perversion, in a society which was shocked by this type of strange and alien behavior, which is an intrusion into society, its culture, its ideas, its ethics, and its customs. [passage omitted]

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Yemen

Yemen: Salih Asserts Stand on Island in Meeting With French Envoy

JN2904192596 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the republic, today received Ambassador Francis Gutmann, envoy of French President Jacques Chirac. Gutmann briefed the brother president on the outcome of his talks in Asmara within the framework of the French mediation and good offices to settle the dispute between our country and Eritrea resulting from the Eritrean aggression and occupation of the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir Island.

The brother president expressed his appreciation for the active efforts made by the French envoy and his government to achieve a peaceful solution. He reiterated our country's genuine desire to settle the dispute peacefully through international arbitration. He asserted Yemen's cooperation to ensure the success of the French envoy's mission in achieving this goal. He said that our country will further cooperate with the good offices of France, based on its sense of responsibility toward the international community and eagerness to boost security, stability, and safety of international navigation in the Red Sea. He said that the peaceful solution is the correct option that will ward off tension from the region and guarantee the interests of all parties.

The audience was attended by Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and (Marcel Lubil), French ambassador to Yemen.

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Iraq: UN Delegates Cited on U.S., UK 'Interference' in Oil Talks

JN2704064496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1745 GMT 26 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 26 Apr (INA)—Political circles at the UN Security Council expressed hope that the fourth round of Iraqi-UN dialogue on oil-for-food and the basic needs for the Iraqi people would produce a final agreement between the two sides.

UN reports asserted that the UN secretary general had agreed with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz to resume the talks after his return from a tour outside New York. The reports also said that the next round of talks would focus on the unofficial working paper, which covers most issues related to Resolution No. 986.

The reports pointed out that the UN secretary general was viewing the next round of talks with confidence, that he would resume his quiet policy, that he hoped the talks would not leak to the press, and that he asserted that both sides have a political will to produce positive results.

In his statements yesterday, Juan Somavia, Chilean ambassador and current Security Council president, said that the UN secretary general and Tariq 'Aziz exchanged views in a positive atmosphere during the talks that were held at the UN headquarters. In his statement the day before yesterday [24 April], Tariq 'Aziz said that Iraq's delegation exerted its utmost effort during three hours of talks to reach a balanced agreement.

He said that there was a serious opportunity to reach an agreement, that U.S. and British interference in the negotiations blocked that possibility, that the UN delegation twice backed down on several aspects of an understanding, and that the two delegations were about to sign the memorandum of understanding after working out an unofficial working paper on 11 April. The U.S. and British delegates prevented the signing of the memorandum for political purposes.

Reports from the United Nations asserted that the U.S. and British delegates worked to foil every possible understanding between Iraq and the United Nations by leaking the contents of the unofficial working paper to the U.S. press.

Reports from the Security Council disclosed that the three-hour long consultations the security Council held yesterday afternoon were heated and that 13 member states voiced dissatisfaction with the U.S. and British delegates for violating the secrecy, which was agreed upon at the beginning of the talks between the United Nations and Iraq.

During yesterday's consultations, UN Legal adviser Hans Corell reviewed the results of the third round of dialogue, which showed that violating the secrecy of the talks by the U.S. and British delegates for political purposes hampered the negotiations.

In this regard, the Italian and German ambassadors talked about the failure to respect the secrecy of the talks. They noted their discontent with the leak of restricted information to the U.S. press. Ambassador Nariman Garikhan [name as transliterated], adviser to the secretary general, attended the talks. He expressed the secretary general's dissatisfaction with some parties' breach of the agreement to keep the talks secret.

Russian Ambassador Sergey Lavrov criticized the interference in the course of the Iraq-UN dialogue and the leaking of information about the talks to the U.S. press. He said: For several weeks, I have been saying that there should not be any interference from any side in the talks. French Ambassador De Jammai [name as transliterated] drew the attention of the council members that these talks are held exclusively between the UN General Secretariat and Iraq. Other ambassadors referred to Paragraph 13 of the resolution authorizing the secretary general to hold discussions.

UN diplomatic sources indicated that despite the unequivocal evidence produced by the ambassadors of 13 states about interference in the affairs of talks and the leakage of information to the U.S. press, the U.S. and British representatives tried to escape embarrassment. The British ambassador tried to defend interference in the dialogue sessions in coordination with the United States. Meanwhile, the U.S. ambassador tried to extricate himself from the impasse by saying that his country has clarified its view regarding the implementation of Resolution 986. However, he did not clarify this view nor its suspect aims.

An INA correspondent at the UN said that the informal consultations held yesterday moved to a more difficult stage when Egyptian Ambassador Majid 'Abd-al-'Aziz read the text of a statement made by Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz and requested that the statement be interpreted into the other official languages of the council members.

The Egyptian ambassador apologized that he will not name the parties clearly referred to by Tariq 'Aziz' statement. In his statement, 'Aziz had noted the progress of matters during the third round and the efforts exerted by the Iraqi delegation to arrive at an agreement. He explained that there was a real chance to arrive at a balanced agreement. However, the U.S. and British interference in the progress of the negotiations killed that possibility. As a result of that interference, he said,

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the UN delegation retreated twice from points about which an understanding and an agreement had been reached.

Tariq 'Aziz stressed that the continued arbitrary U.S. and British interference in the course of the discussions poses a serious threat to them. He urged the UN Security Council members to play their natural role in effecting a balance in dealing with the subject and to prevent two council members from interfering in the talks for biased political purposes.

UN diplomats noted widespread satisfaction, among the permanent and nonpermanent members of the council, with the courageous Iraqi stand which exposed the ploys of the U.S. and British ambassadors. They stressed that Iraq's determined defense of its people's rights will lead to positive results in the fourth round. All reports indicate that the next round will be final and decisive.

Iraq: Joint Iraqi-Jordanian Transport Company To Expand

JN2704105596 Baghdad INA in English 1030 GMT 27 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman, April 27, INA—Profits of the Iraqi-Jordanian Transport Company was amounted at 3.3 million dinars last year, a report for INA correspondent here said.

Director general of the company gave out that they intend to raise the company's capital from 50 to 70 million JD [Jordanian dinars] in addition to increasing its trucks from 350 to 700 trucks in the near future.

He further explained that the transport company had participated in transferring different goods and quantities of around 3,000 tons of Iraqi oil to Jordan daily.

Iraq: Pakistani Ship Carrying 'Gift' of Rice Arrives at Port

JN2704082496 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 26 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The ship ("Free Boldge"), laden with 5,000 tonnes of Pakistani rice, cast anchor in the Port of Umm Qasr in the al-Basrah Governorate. The rice shipment is a gift from the Pakistani people to the Iraqi people.

The correspondent of the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY in the governorate said that several officials of the Pakistani Embassy in Baghdad were on hand to receive the ship, and that port workers began to unload the ship and transport the shipment to the governorates via land transport trucks. Meanwhile, the necessary marine, maintenance, and fuelling services were rendered to the ship.

Iraq: Kurdish Party Leader on Talks in Syria, Opposition

JN2904181296 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1500 GMT 29 Apr 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] Leader Mas'ud Barzani said he asked Syrian officials to facilitate the passage of Kurds through Syria's borders with Iraqi Kurdistan. He said he expects positive results from his meeting with President al-Asad.

Regarding the state of the Iraqi opposition abroad and whether its plans could succeed, Barzani told Radio Monte Carlo:

[Begin Barzani recording] Regrettably, the opposition has become more dependent on others than ever. It waits for solutions from outside. We believe this is a big mistake. The Iraqis should solve their problems by themselves. They can ask friends to help, but it is a big mistake to wait for others to fight for them or solve their problems. This will lead nowhere. [end recording]

The KDP leader said changes should come from within. He said he rejects the annexation of Iraq to any country in the region because Iraq, as he says, is bigger than this.

On the question of federation that was put forth by the Jordanian king, Barzani said: In principle, we are not against this initiative. However, we need more details on such a plan.

On the possible opening of the Syrian-Iraqi borders which was recently discussed, Barzani said:

[Begin recording] It is no secret that the Iraqi people's tribulation is serious and real and becomes more so daily. I believe that opening Syria's borders with Iraq will alleviate the Iraqi people's suffering. This can take place under Syrian control. We support any step that alleviates the Iraqi people's suffering. We also support the opening of Syria's borders with Iraq. [end recording]

Iraq: Gang Activity, Arrests Reported

96LH0171A Baghdad ALIF BA' in Arabic 13 Mar 96 p 18

[Report by Hamid 'Abdallah]

[FBIS Translated Text] One day at noon, four tattooed young people walked down the main street in the al-Amin al-Thaniyah district in Baghdad al-Jadidah

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carrying sticks and started ordering shop owners to close their shop. When some of them did not obey their orders, they smashed their shop windows, scattered their goods, and beat them.

The scene was strange, amazing, and terrifying. No one was able to stop these reckless young people. After completing their "task" and the dust settled, it became clear that the gang's leader was Hatim Hukumah, a notorious criminal in the al-Amin al-Thaniyah district. His criminal record included robberies, forgeries, and assaults. No one dared to confront this evil man because he planted fear in the hearts of people following the many crimes he has committed. He was jailed often, but has always resumed his criminal activity after getting out of prison.

He apparently got the nickname Hukumah [government] because some people thought this criminal has become too tough for the law or that he has become a government. However, things have changed completely, as we will explain now.

Major 'Abd-al-Karim Maryush, an al-Rashad police officer, told me that the police have arrested the members of a dangerous gang engaged in robbery, murder, and forgery. When the officer began telling me about this gang, he mentioned the name Hatim Hukumah. Immediately I asked him:

Was he known to you?

He replied: He was the leader of the gang.

Colonel Shallal Ibrahim al-'Azzawi, the superintendent of the Baghdad al-Jadidah police who was making a field inspection in the al-Amin district, intervened, saying:

No criminal, however vicious he may be, can confront the police and get away. The power of some criminals is an exaggeration and illusion. Criminals are normally very afraid. Cooperation between the public and the responsible authorities is the only way to remove this cancer from our society.

Continuing his story about the gang, Maj. 'Abd-al-Karim said:

Hatim Hukumah's gang has been under our surveillance. We had good information about its activities. With the cooperation of our comrades from the al-Amin police force, we carried out a plan to arrest the gang members.

The gang's activities extended from the al-Amin district to other areas in Baghdad. The gang's crimes included theft, armed robbery, forgery, and assaults. The last crime carried out by the gang was in the al-Bayya' area. We received information about the names of the gang members, their location, and the forged identity cards they carried. Some of them carried cards that identified them as security men or officials from important departments. They used various stamps to forge these identity cards. Some of them also carried forged military service cards.

We prepared a good plan to arrest them. Members of the team entrusted with carrying out the plan were very enthusiastic about their mission. We identified the house in which the criminals were staying and surrounded it. However, we only found two of them in it. They were Hatim Hukumah and Muzaffar Munir. Muzaffar had been sentenced to 40 years in prison, but he had escaped after attacking a prison officer in Diyala. Hatim is a veteran prisoner. The two criminals tried to escape, but the police cordon was tight. Muzaffar surrendered to the police, while Hatim tried to run away, moving from house to house. The police ran after him. When they cornered him, he threw a grenade at the police, who opened fire at him, hitting him several times. He was taken to the hospital. We no longer needed his confession as we had sufficient information about his activities, Maj. 'Abd-al-Karim said. Hatim Hukumah died of his wounds three days later.

We have arrested all the members of the gang. They included three brothers: Diya' Jallub, Safa' Jallub, and Muhammad Jallub. They also included Mu'ayyad 'Abd-al-Khadir, alias Abu-Shiffah, and Jamal Haqqi, alias Jamal al-Hilu. This gang provided information about other criminals, the search for whom is still going on.

Iraq: Article Laments Student Delinquency

96LH0178A Baghdad ALIF BA' in Arabic 6 Mar 96 pp 16-17

[Article by Hind Rashid: "Student Delinquency: Why? Who Is Responsible?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] When she was summoned to the police station, many thoughts crossed her mind. She nearly fainted from shock when she found him behind bars in the station. "Utterly impossible," she shouted, but she could not disbelieve her eyes. Standing before her was her son, who she had always believed was the best of his peers, the most polite and the most moral, and on whom she had fixed great hopes.

The secondary school student had become criminally delinquent. His name was added to the names of others at other stages of schooling who have fallen victim to the exceptional circumstances of the embargo.

Who is responsible? The student? The guardians? The school? Society? This tour is an attempt to answer

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an important question about a phenomenon that has affected our schools rich in educational values.

A school briefcase, but not like other briefcases. It does not contain books and papers. On the other hand, it is not empty. It contains two things. Can you imagine? Thousands of dinars. Clothing in a variety of styles, but a single size.

The dinars are the result; the clothing the means.

Result of what? Means for what? You shall have the answer as we tell the story of the briefcase and its owner—an intermediate school girl no more than 15 years old.

Having devised a good plan for reaching the teachers' room undetected, she can always find an excuse for entering a girls' school. One time she comes to visit teacher S.—not in school clothes. She enters the school grounds on this pretext; no guard or assistant stops her. Another time she comes dressed like a student in the uniform of a neighboring school. She comes to steal the contents of teachers' briefcases and to leave safely.

One day, after the fame of the thieving visitor had spread, the principal of a school in Saddam City, the thief's area, was able to catch her in the act and turned her over to the nearest police station. She turned out to be a student at a neighboring intermediate school. She was a professional thief who specialized mainly in robbing schools.

In fact, the motivation for this inquiry into the subject of delinquency by some students was not this incident. It was the conference held jointly by the National Union of Iraqi Students, the General Directorate of Police, and the Ministry of Education. One of the subjects discussed was student crime. That was what motivated us to examine the subject and to investigate some of the facts in the field.

Our story was but one of hundreds concerning crimes committed by students on school grounds or elsewhere.

Students form the largest group among young people. They are the important sector in the community and future leaders. Thus the problem of student delinquency is considered one of the gravest and most serious social problems, for it is directly connected to the human power that moves communities. Losing young people means losing the power of the community.

Why do some students stray, when they are the most important, most hopeful, and most balanced sector?

We expected the Ministry of Education, as the agency concerned with the matter, to have studies available that could be used to understand the real reasons for student delinquency. We knocked on its door. The answer was that what we were looking for was not available. We were advised to go to the union committees at the schools themselves, because, as the ministry told us, they were concerned with the matter. We do not know why the union committees or social advisers have neglected to supply the ministry with studies and reports on the subject as ought to have happened.

When we went to the schools, the responses were varied. Some — a few —expressed cooperation. Some utterly denied the possibility that any of their students had become delinquent — one heard something quite different from the students.

We tried in vain to explain to some of the school administrations that we only wanted to learn some of the facts by our study and thereby contribute to proposing solutions and alerting those concerned to pursue the matter more seriously. We had not come to raise questions about any particular school.

Before going into the psychological, economic, and social reasons, we wanted to become acquainted in the field with the types of delinquency, deviance, or what can be called "student crime." Let us consider the following evidence:

The principal of al-Intifadah Intermediate School in Saddam City, Mr. Jabbar Yusuf 'Ali, states that there is no place for delinquent students in his small school, except for a few petty thefts—students sometimes steal each others' things. It usually is difficult to determine who did it. "Because of the difficult economic conditions," he says, "I once lost a fan, laboratory equipment, and such things. But I can state with 90 percent certainty that the criminals were from outside the school, not its students. So much for thefts —as for moral delinquency, we have never recorded any cases calling for investigations. But it would be strange for us not to find a male student who does not refrain from using provocative words toward a girl walking in the street. We try our best to give advice and sometimes punishment to those who do such things, whenever we discover them."

— What about attacks on teachers and involvement in bribery?

"Since 1987, while I have been the administrator of this school, we have not recorded any attack by a student on his teacher — leaving out minor verbal altercations that can happen at any time in any school at any level.

"As for bribes, it is very difficult for us to find them practiced here" — he means in poor neighborhoods — "for two reasons: first, the economic weakness of the families; second, indifference about whether their children pass or fail. Some families even want their

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children to leave school in order to work to help support them."

We went next to an intermediate school in the same area and spoke to the assistant principal, Mr. Khalid Mufattin. We understood from his conversation with us that most student problems or delinquencies are solved within the walls of the school. Except for murder, they are not sent to the police as cases.

Mr. Khalid says: "The tribal aspect plays its role in this area, so that discovering any crime committed by a student takes place between the administration and his relatives. Most crimes on school grounds do not go beyond thefts among students or thefts of the school's electrical or laboratory equipment. These are usually difficult to uncover.

"As for crimes by students outside of school, we are far from them. Sometimes we hear that a student from some school has committed murder or theft outside of school. The school has no connection with it. It is, as you know, the concern of other agencies."

— What if you discover a thief — a student — stealing school furniture or his colleague's briefcase?

"We punish the student and contact his family to pay a fine or return the stolen items."

I pondered the assistant principal's answer. It was an objective answer that revealed how school administrations actually handle such cases. I wondered whether one could stop a guilty student in this way — whether one could convince him to refrain from repeating his behavior or eradicate his delinquency.

The union committee and the social adviser used to perform their roles well, but today we find that they have abandoned their duties under circumstances in which one would assume that their responsibilities would grow.

Students in several schools utterly denied that there was any social adviser playing the role he or she ought to be playing.

As we left Revolution Secondary School for Boys, a number of students gathered round us, wanting to talk about what they called "the crime against students" and to which students become party by choice or by compulsion—certainly they are unfairly treated.

That is the crime of bribery.

Their talk was cloaked with caution, but they could not restrain their tongues from speaking.

One student spoke of the 50,000 dinars he paid last year as the price to pass a subject and advance into the next class, having exhausted all opportunities for review and delay.

Another witness testified about her family — we mean the educational family — a woman principal who complained and criticized her professional colleagues who harm the educational family. Here is the teacher of a subject X at school Y at al-A'zamiyah, who demands a certain sum of money as the price for passing any student, whatever the level of his knowledge. Here is the teacher of subject Z who prefers concrete gifts, not money, as compensation.

Thus the teacher contributes and even forces the student to commit an infraction. Bribery is one of the most serious crimes. Sometimes it leads to a series of other crimes, especially thefts to cover the cost, which hangs over the student like a debt.

The unequal relationships based on interest now developing between some students and their teachers lead to delinquency and crime. Teachers have turned into businessmen and brokers selling grades. The phenomenon of private tuition for those who pay more only contributes to student delinquency. It corrupts the educational and spiritual environment of school relations. We need only imagine how someone who cannot pay feels!

Although we did not become acquainted with all the kinds of student crime, we understood from the preceding evidence that the indications of delinquency among students fall into two groups: evidences of delinquent behavior on school grounds, and evidences of delinquent behavior off school grounds.

We visited the School for Young Adults (the prison for youths 18 to 22 years of age) to find out the proportion of inmates who were students. It turned out that according to the school's records there was not a single case in which a student had committed his crime on school grounds. However, there were many inmates who were students who had committed various crimes at various stages of their education. It turned out that 80 percent of them had been convicted of murder, according to the school records and as we were informed by the prison school's social investigator, Mr. Ja'far Lazim.

This indicates that most student crimes committed on school grounds are investigated and solved within the school. Most of them are never revealed at all, or it is difficult to learn who committed them. They are so-called "dark crimes," about which it is difficult for security agencies to learn or provide a count and statistics — so we were told by Major General Akram 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Mashhadani, director of the

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Center for Research and Study at the General Police Directorate.

Most student inmates, as we have indicated, have been convicted of murder committed away from the school grounds.

Inmate A., a student at the Teachers Institute, was convicted of a murder that resulted from an argument with the victim due to provocative remarks toward certain girls. A. said he had not intended to kill; it was fate that had led everyone into the situation.

Inmate S., a secondary school student from al-Kut, had entered prison in 1988, when he was 15 years old. He seems to have been driven to committing his crime. He says that had he not avenged his uncle's death, he would now be bearing the shame. "It is better for me," he said, "to spend my life behind bars in prison than to live free, pursued by the curse of the tribe."

An unknown fate awaits inmate D. after he leaves the prison school. Someone is waiting for him to get out to take revenge on him.

Most of the school's inmates were driven to this destiny by circumstances. Few of them chose to follow the road of delinquency.

The delinquency of some youths, students, and juveniles cannot be attributed to a single factor. It is a problem arising from the interweaving of many factors that react with each other to produce the deviant behavior termed "crime."

The problem is no longer a matter of individuals. It is a social problem consisting of social behavior that deviates from the rules that society has set for correct behavior. These rules set certain standards deviation from which leads to a clear reaction from the group.

A juvenile student's deviation from community-approved social and ethical values and standards can be considered the beginning of crime.

The family is the basic social unit in the social structure. It is important for the cohesion and stability of society. It is the primary cell that nurtures children and guarantees them shelter, food, and clothing. The family gives the child a feeling of stability and confidence. The more the family coheres, the more effective is its influence on the individual's decisions and behavior. Studies show the effect of family break-up on youth crime. They show that there is a relation between wrong methods of child rearing and cases of crime. Parental cruelty or laxness and indifference are both factors that lead to and encourage delinquency and crime.

Economic need is a prominent factor in delinquency. A large family with meager economic resources and a low level of culture and education gives the parents no chance to provide their children with a good social and moral upbringing because of their limited ability to impart ethics, values, and positive standards.

Bad housing conditions and many families living in one house are among the things that encourage delinquency. For example, when a home lacks sanitary facilities, quiet, or means of relaxation, it drives the student into the street, where he is liable to fall into minor infractions because of lack of supervision and guidance. This usually ends in delinquency and antisocial behavior.

The child or youth learns new roles at school. He reacts with his teachers in their capacity as new leaders and ideal behavior models.

Often the school is deficient in fully performing its mission and fails to give the younger generation a good preparation. Lack of attention to a student's mental abilities can hamper his progress and his keeping pace with his schoolmates, especially when the material is not made attractive to the student and when the administration and educational supervisors play no role in observing and following the behavior and emotions of students at school and outside.

If students run away from school at an early age or become truants, they loiter with other truants and dropouts. They fall under the influence of older delinquents who are not slow to teach them how to steal, pick pockets, deceive, beg, and other kinds of delinquent and criminal behavior.

Criminologists say that students usually run away from school as a result of somehow lacking emotional satisfaction. A feeling of hatred for school and dissatisfaction develops in them.

Just as the school has a role in student and juvenile delinquency, it has a role to play in correcting student behavior and personal development and in providing them with a sound educational development.

The amount of deviant behavior varies according to the age of the persons: those below the age of responsibility, students who are juveniles, and those who have come of age. Each group has definite types of behavior.

Most major delinquency begins with minor delinquency: cheating on tests, stealing from schoolmates and from school property, habitual smoking, and other negative phenomena.

We therefore say that this phenomenon, for whose spread in our society there is no objective basis, must be considered with care, especially by researchers and specialists. Essentially, it has developed under the

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abnormal conditions embodied in the unjust blockade, which has provided the appropriate economic matrix for these phenomenon to emerge. In order to confront the phenomenon the relation between the school and legal guardians should be strengthened. Correction should start early, beginning with small deviations, to prevent the commission of crime. We should not wait for the student to progress far along the road of committing a series of small delinquencies, until he arrives at a state that lands him to prison as a murderer, felon, or thief.

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Israel: Clinton, Peres Agree To Tighten Cooperation Against Iran

TA2904150896 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Shim'on Peres have agreed to tighten intelligence cooperation between the United States and Israel, especially with regard to Iran. The two men convened in the Oval Office at the White House for an hour-long meeting. The two leaders also agreed to expedite the peace process, but no concrete steps were decided upon. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports from Washington:

[Begin Segal recording] After a joint election appearance at the AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] convention, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres left for the White House for an official meeting with the U.S. President. Sources in the Israeli entourage said that the complimentary speeches made by the two leaders was followed by a friendly meeting at the Oval Office.

Here are some of the practical understandings reached between Bill Clinton and Shim'on Peres: The United States and Israel will strengthen their intelligence cooperation, with an emphasis on Iran. The two men agreed to form an international mechanism which, in diplomatic language, will provide greater transparency with regard to Iran's dealings. In practice, this mechanism is designed to supply concrete proof of the terrorist activities Iran conducts and encourages. The mechanism will disclose the Iranian funding for terrorist bases belonging to Hizballah, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and the Islamic Jihad, and expose Tehran's international terrorism network, which operates from within the framework of Iranian diplomatic representations throughout the world.

President Clinton and Prime Minister Peres also began to discuss the follow-up committee that was decided upon within the framework of the new understandings to stop the fighting in south Lebanon. Clinton praised Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat for the steps he is taking against terrorism and for revoking the Palestinian Charter. 'Arafat is scheduled to hold a visit to the United States in the near future, after fulfilling his commitments. Clinton and Peres agreed to promote the peace process and discussed the joint statement they will issue tomorrow in Washington, in which they will apparently announce that both countries will examine the possibility of signing a mutual defense pact in future.

In a short while, Peres is slated to meet with Senator Bob Dole and the Senate leadership. This evening, Israel time, he will leave for New York. [end recording]

Israel: Peres on Peace Process, Nuclear Threat, U.S. Defense Pact

TA2904153296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1405 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres is continuing his visit to the United States, devoting today to meetings with U.S. Congress and Jewish community leaders. Our correspondent Hayim Zissowitz is on the phone from Washington, and he tells us about a crowded and busy schedule:

[Zissowitz] A crowded and busy schedule, indeed. The man is exhausting us. A short time ago, he concluded an important meeting with members of the prestigious Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He was asked about a variety of issues, and we will briefly review some of them.

Asked about progress toward the permanent arrangement, the prime minister lavished praise on the Palestinians, saying they had canceled the clause in the Palestinian Charter calling for Israel's destruction and had begun fighting terror. We definitely appreciate this; we expect to make progress and we will, he stated. This is the time to make progress, Peres said, noting that the next phase will start on 5 May. We have to release more prisoners, and we will; we have to pull out of Hebron, and we will, as soon as a timetable is set.

Asked about the pact or agreements signed with Turkey, Peres said he does not understand those who expressed concern about them. These are more tactical than military agreements, he said.

One of the issues which featured prominently in the questions posed to the prime minister was the invasion or attack in Lebanon. The prime minister said: We have no territorial claims on Lebanon. As far as we are concerned, we will be happy to see an independent Lebanon. Referring to the Syrian presence there, he said: When there are two armed authorities in one country, it is no wonder that independence is lost. Nevertheless, he defended the agreement attained last Saturday [27 April], saying it was a written — albeit unsigned — agreement backed by the United States, which includes a serious commitment by Syria. Therefore, it stands to reason that it will be honored.

The prime minister went on to comment on Iran and the nuclear threat, saying he was surprised by the position adopted by Egypt, which lashes out at the reactor in Dimona and the possession of nuclear weapons. Peres said: We do not admit to possessing nuclear weapons, but as long as Egypt cannot stop Iran and other countries threatening Israel with weapons of mass destruction, why should we be expected to willingly

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give up our defensive weapons? Why should we let countries seeking to destroy us get their way?

These are some of the headlines in the prime minister's remarks. He is now making his to way to Congress, where he will meet with Senator Bob Dole, the Republican presidential candidate.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 29 April notes that in his address, Peres said that "in his opinion, the time has not yet come for a defense pact between Israel and the United States. Such a pact has advantages and disadvantages, he said, and that is why it should not made in a hurry. He went on to say that he believes that the United States and Israel will agree to set up a working team to study the subject. Peres stated: As I see it, the best way is to integrate as many countries as possible into such a pact."]

Israel: Officials Deny 'Arafat To Meet With Peres in U.S.

TA2904185396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Secretary Warren Christopher has confirmed that Yasir 'Arafat will come to Washington tomorrow. His spokesman said this is a private visit and is only natural, mainly in the wake of the Palestine National Council's decision to abrogate the charter that called for Israel's annihilation. An administration official noted that 'Arafat will confer with President Clinton.

Our Washington correspondent Hayim Zissowitz adds that Israeli officials denied reports that 'Arafat will also confer with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

Israel: Peres on Hizballah Arrest in Europe, 'Arafat Meeting, Lebanon

TA3004050696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres is back in Washington after addressing Jewish leaders in New York. He and U.S. President Clinton are to discuss widening military cooperation between the two countries and the possible signing of a joint defense pact. They are also signing a joint agreement to cooperate in the war on terror. The prime minister told reporters that a ring of the Hizballah has been arrested in Europe. [Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0400 GMT on 30 May reports that the Hizballah ring was detained in France.] He also said Israel would help Lebanon to repair damages caused by the Grapes of Wrath operation.

[Begin Peres recording] If the Lebanese will be ready to, we are ready to consider to help to reconstruct the part of southern Lebanon. The peace is like a galloping horse; when it passes nearby your home, either you mount it or you lose the opportunity. [end recording]

Peres also praised Yasir 'Arafat for meeting his commitment to vote on amending the PLO's covenant to delete the clauses calling for Israel's destruction. The Palestinian leader is flying to Washington where he is scheduled to meet with President Clinton tomorrow. A Palestinian diplomat says the two will be discussing the next stage of the peace talks with Israel. 'Arafat is en route to Washington following a meeting in Cairo with President Husni Mubarak. They discussed the final status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

Prime Minister Peres also confirmed that 'Arafat has asked to see him in Washington. It will be their first meeting since the Palestinian National Council voted to amend the charter, as well as the first meeting since the cease-fire in Lebanon.

The prime minister added that he will be discussing the possible release of Jonathan Pollard with American officials. Pollard's family is said to be disappointed with what they regard as the prime minister's lack of interest in the case. They also criticized the government for not sending any official to visit Pollard in prison.

Israel: Peres Addresses AIPAC on Lebanon, Peace

TA3004110796 Jerusalem GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE in English 0950 GMT 29 Apr 96

["Text" of Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' address to the AIPAC Conference in Washington on 29 April]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr. President, Dear Friends, Ladies, and Gentlemen. I come to you from Jerusalem, with a fresh message — we have just concluded another campaign to save peace and defend Israel. From here in Washington, I salute the women and men of Israel for their courage and determination not to allow anyone to threaten their lives, not to allow any Katyushas to kill peace.

Mr. President, it is this same people of Israel which salutes you, a great leader of the free world. A man whose power and position is translated into strategies and actions, through a deep commitment to the values of peace, justice and liberty. You have led the struggle for a better life in our part of the world, and you have succeeded.

As a true friend of the State and People of Israel, you embraced a whole nation when we were in pain. You provided a supporting shoulder to us to achieve

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an historic goal. You captured our hearts when you stood at the tomb of the unforgettable Yitzhaq Rabin. Again, you shed a tear after the terrorist bombings killed innocent people in Jerusalem, Ashqelon and Tel Aviv. Never shall I forget your moving encounters with the Israeli youth. I saw their eyes light up with brightness, with hope, with faith.

In the name of the generation of hope in Israel, thank you Mr. President. Thank you friend, thank you dear friend, Ladies and Gentlemen, peace must be defended. The profound partnership between the United States and Israel is based on the dual assumption that we must take the initiative for peace and at the same time defend it from those who seek to destroy it. We shall overcome the enemies of peace, they shall not succeed. Peace will prevail.

Mr. President, this past week has been significant, for you and for us. The Palestinian National Council, echoing the Oslo Accords, has voted to abolish those articles in its Covenant that call for the destruction of the State of Israel, and has thus terminated an ideology of hatred which resulted in so much bloodshed.

Moreover, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, upon your initiative, achieved a written understanding encompassing the Syrians and the Lebanese to cease acts of hostility and offer tranquility on both sides of the Israel-Lebanon border.

Lebanon is now a partner to a cease-fire, and hopefully the understanding may serve as a draft for the peace of the future.

Syria joined this understanding, and in doing so, hopefully raised the prospect for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

We could not have travelled this difficult road to peace alone. The great nation of the United States, deciding the fate of our time, stands on the side of peace. A nation which, like ours, draws from the sources and the moral vision of the Prophets. In the words of Zechariah: "The weapons of war shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace to the nations: and His Dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

This vision is shared by the People of America, their elected representatives in Congress, by the Administration and above all, by the White House.

A few years ago, when Yitzhaq Rabin and I, with the encouragement of the President, the Administration and Congress, initiated the peace process, few believed that this boat would cross the ocean of skepticism. Many said that there is no solution to the Palestinian problem, and the PLO would never abandon terrorism or change its infamous Covenant. Many thought that Jordan would not be among the first to join the peace process, and that Syria and Lebanon would maintain their traditional distance. Some said that the Arab world is not ready for accommodation. It took a bold decision and a bold vision to defy these doubts and to move ahead.

For many years, the convention was to negotiate with oneself. After all, it is easier than negotiating with the other party. The change occurred when both sides recognized that there are two sides to a conflict, that to negotiate, there is a need of a partner. We learned that a peace plan without a partner is a dead end, while, a partner, even without a peace plan, may be a real beginning. The difficult decision at the time, was to accept Yasir 'Arafat as a partner. Recognizing a partner is the first concession to open a negotiation. Without the engagement of the President and the Secretary of State, the Middle East would have continued to produce files of plans without finding partners.

The Middle East conflict is perhaps not the largest conflict, but certainly one of the most complicated in this century. The initiatives are beginning to bear fruit:

— For the first time, Palestinians and Israelis are engaged in an ongoing dialogue within an accepted framework.

— For the first time in this century, Palestinians are combating terrorism.

— For the first time, the Palestinian Covenant was changed by the Palestinians.

— For the first time, an Arab country, Jordan, plans, together with us, a joint airfield, industrial parks, to transform the border from a rift into a joint venture.

— For the first time, the U.S. hammered out a written understanding encompassing Syria, Lebanon and Israel to prevent aggression.

— The Lebanese and the Palestinians realized that in order to achieve territorial integrity, they must attain integrity of authority. Where there are two armed authorities, there can be no order. Only one authority can provide the essence of government.

— For the first time, regional economic conferences took place in Casablanca and Amman.

— For the first time in history, an American President, President Clinton, convened in the Middle East, 13 Arab leaders, together with the most important leaders of our time, to launch a campaign against terrorism.

Peace has made its first bold strides toward the forging of a new reality. Peace has again been confronted

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with a counterattack. Libya, Iraq, and particularly Iran, are attempting to destroy the peace process. They use terrorist organizations like Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Islamic Jihad and Hizballah to stop it through explosives and suicide terrorists, to convince public opinion that it is impossible to reach peace. You, Mr. President, provided the inspiration to the peace process, and stood up against the enemies of peace.

My dear friends, we must continue to build a new Middle East, enjoying a high standard of living; otherwise, fundamentalism will undermine the hope for peace. Fundamentalism thrives on terror, uses deceit, seeks unconventional weapons, and tries to control the rich oil wells. We must overcome it for the sake of the people, and their present and future prosperity.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our goals remain clear. Before the curtain falls on this century, we shall try:

1) First, to establish a lasting and comprehensive peace in the entire Middle East. Once we have achieved peace with Syria and Lebanon, I am convinced that the other Arab countries will follow. Mr. President, I believe that the lawns of the White House can withstand such a great occasion, and before long, we shall declare the end to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

2) Second, we have to raise the standard of living in the Middle East, to prove that investment in education, science and technology, offers a bright future to all our sons and daughters. Indeed, the higher the standards of living, the lower the standard of violence. We have relinquished territories without losing opportunities. Our Jewish people has traditionally had more talent than geography. So we rely on intelligence. Intelligence can be nurtured. It may be enhanced; it knows no territorial or ethnic boundaries. It is the product of motivation and diligence; it is open to the world and accessible to every individual.

3) Thirdly, the emphasis should be, of course, on education. Scientific levels are not acquired in the battlefield but in the classrooms. In Israel, we have doubled our national investment in education; and today, the education budget in shekels equals the defense budget, and, as defense minister, I am not jealous. We now have more teachers than officers, and this trend will continue.

4) Finally, I wish to address the Jewish people. The history of our people shows that we did not enjoy conventional standards. We were driven out of our country two thousand years ago. We were dispersed all over the world. We were cut off from one another. We endured pain, insults, pogroms, rape, and finally the Holocaust. Then, we gathered, and became again a nation. We returned to our homeland, and turned a desert into a blooming garden; we revived our ancient tongue, so that our children are playing in the language of the prophets. We have built a democratic society, and not a single day of war impinged on a single day of freedom. We have been attacked five times in forty eight years. Even when outnumbered and outgunned, we emerged victorious. We have created industries exporting sophisticated products to all parts of the world, including Japan.

Our know-how in fields such as agriculture is exported to many countries in the developing world. We have a highly developed educational system.

What, then, is Israel's message? It is a messages of faith. If in the last century, we brought together our people and built our territorial homeland, in the next century, we have to foster and consolidate our traditions — scientific and spiritual — and become a center of learning and light. Then, Israel will become an invitation for the future, not just a compensation for the past. It will be an invitation to a new Jerusalem.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Jerusalem will remain united and the capital of Israel. We have united it, it is now uniting us. But Jerusalem will also become the city of peace, the city in which fresh spirits shall roam among ancient walls.

Mr. President, John F. Kennedy often quoted George Bernard Shaw: "Some people see things as they are and ask Why? I dream dreams that never were and ask Why Not?" So, why not?

Mr. President, our common resolve will bring us to our goal. Peace will prevail — terror will be defeated. Prosperity will gain — despair will be overcome. A new Middle East will emerge, free of violence and tyranny. We will offer those young people who were so touched by your leadership and passion, as well as the young among Israel's neighbors, a new, a safe, a better tomorrow.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, you represent here today the great People of America, through its Administration and its Congress. I wish to conclude with a message of gratitude. Thank you America for this great alliance, for your unique friendship, for your unprecedented support.

AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] is an American grassroots organization dedicated to enhancing United States-Israel relations. AIPAC has always led this essential mission, with faith and devotion, with deep inner conviction and with an incomparable ability to perform. Our countries' bilateral interests, common values and fraternity — together with the

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talent and wisdom of AIPAC's voluntary leaders, members and staff — are the secret of this success.

Melvin and Neal, on behalf of the State of Israel, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Your activities are essential and I am sure the same spirit and partnership will lead us in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen, yesterday in synagogues throughout the world, Jews read the words from Amos: "And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink their wine; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, says the Lord thy God."

The people of Israel is proud to realize the vision. On their behalf I am very grateful to the People, the Congress, and the Administration of the United States, and to you, Mr. President, for your endeavors. I also thank the Jewish community of America for its wonderful partnership. Together we will continue to work, in brotherly unison, with faith and determination, for peace and security for all, and to transform another dream into a new exciting reality.

Israel: Peres Gets 'Unprecedented' Clinton Backing; Likud Reacts

TA2904183796 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 29 Apr 96

[Political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] We open our program tonight with a report about unprecedented support by a U.S. President for a candidate running for office in a democratic state. President Bill Clinton actually recited a pro-Peres election slogan in a joint appearance before AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] in Washington. For his part, Peres used the occasion to make promises resembling those made during an election campaign in Israel. Our correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports from Washington:

[Begin recording] [Rosen] "Four more years; four more years." This is what the 4,000 persons attending the AIPAC meeting chanted at Clinton and Peres, who want to have four more years at the White House and in the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem. Some will say that most of the chanting was actually aimed at Clinton, but in effect what they heard here last night was an enthusiastic speech by the U.S. President in support of Shim'on Peres' election campaign. Old-time AIPAC members cannot remember such support for an Israeli prime minister. Peres agrees.

[Peres] It was the most far-reaching speech about U.S. commitments toward Israel. [passage omitted]

Maybe he really thinks I am doing the right things. It is not such a bad drawback. You cannot always be cynical and lower all issues to the political level.

[Rosen] Politics or no politics, Shim'on Peres really got a reception here that no other world leader gets. In a meeting last night at the White House, the U.S. President agreed to almost all of Peres' requests, including the establishment of a joint committee that will examine the question of a defense pact and participation in bids for the sale of a satellite launcher. Thus, in high spirits, Peres could be magnanimous toward Yasir 'Arafat.

[Peres, in English] I think what he expects from us is that we shall continue to fulfill the agreement, and we shall do so. We have to release more prisoners, as we have promised. We have to continue with the redeployment in Hebron.

[Rosen] Peres knows this will not get him such a standing ovation in Israel. [end recording]

This evening, the Likud reacted to this report, saying: Israel is an independent state which only last week celebrated the 48th anniversary of its independence. Nobody in the world will decide for Israel's citizens who will be their leader.

Israel: Labor Rejects Likud Criticism of Clinton Backing for Peres

TA3004114296 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 30 Apr 96 pp 1, 23

[Report by Bina Barzel and Orli Azulay-Katz]

[FBIS Translated Text] Senior Likud officials sharply criticized Prime Minister Shim'on Peres yesterday, claiming that he is using President Clinton to help his election campaign.

Likud sources said: "Israel is an independent state, and if some foreign elements think they can influence the Israeli public's choice of leaders, they are wrong."

The Likud's fury was directed against Peres' appearances at Clinton's side during the prime minister's current trip to the United States. "Such recruitment of a U.S. President to an Israeli candidate's election campaign is unprecedented," the Likud sources said.

Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer, the chairman of the Labor Party's election headquarters, reacted yesterday to the Likud's allegations by saying: "The Likud's accusations are brazen and irresponsible. Everything Peres is doing in the United States it out of concern

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for the country's security and strategic aims. The Likud seeks to paralyze the country because of the elections."

The Labor Party spokesman also reacted to the Likud's remarks by saying: "The Likud's statement is spiteful and not serious. It could harm relations between the United States and Israel. The U.S. President is a great friend of Israel, and we are not denying that there is a special relationship between the two countries and between the U.S. President and the Israeli prime minister. The Likud should welcome the massive and continuous support we are receiving from the world's greatest superpower."

Israel: Weizman Terms New Lebanon Understanding 'Better'

TA3004112496 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 30 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by David Rudge and ITIM]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The understandings achieved as a result of Operation Grapes of Wrath are better than those achieved after Operation Accountability, President 'Ezer Weizman said yesterday.

Speaking during an awards ceremony at Bet Hanassi sponsored by the Council for a Beautiful Israel, Weizman said: "It may be that something good will come out of it. We achieved (something) better than what there was before, and less than what he'd hoped for. For the first time, we have the participation of the US and the European Union (in an agreement), and a document signed by the Syrians. This could be an opening to an overall peace in the Middle East, and we should stop criticizing."

He said Qiryat Shemona had suffered serious damage and called on voluntary organizations to help with the rebuilding.

Health Minister Efrayim Sne said the cease-fire agreement did not legitimize Syria's presence in Lebanon. Speaking in Haifa, Sne said that Syria's presence in Lebanon is a fact, since Lebanon is currently controlled by two countries: Syria and Israel, with each guarding its own interests, "and this is the justification Israel has for the security zone, so long as there is no other agreement."

Finance Minister Avraham Shohat visited some of the Katyusha-hit buildings in Qiryat Shemona, after spending the night in Metulla. He later toured other confrontation line settlements, then met with manufacturers and businessmen in Nahariyya.

He said it is still too early to accurately assess the total cost of the damage, both physically and in terms of lost production, trade tourism, and agriculture. "There's no doubt, however, that we are talking about damage, directly and indirectly, of more than NIS 100 million," he said. Israel Electric Corporation managing director Rafi Peled said the company had repaired 54 electrical grids in Qiryat Shemona and that there had been 21 incidents of damage to high tension wires. The repairs cost NIS 700,000, according to Tzvi Koltochnik, director of the IEC's northern district.

Shohat reiterated his promise that the government would give priority to repairing the damage in the North, especially in Qiryat Shemona which bore the brunt of the attacks.

Shohat said he intends to have concrete proposals ready to submit to the government within two weeks.

Israel: Russia Seeks Cosponsor Role in Permanent Arrangement Talks

TA3004114096 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 30 Apr 96 p A1

[Report by 'Aqiva Eldar, Aluf Ben, and Yerah Tal]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Russia seeks to cosponsor, along with the United States, the opening ceremony of the talks on the permanent arrangement between Israel and the Palestinians. Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat may also attend the opening session.

Russian Ambassador to Israel Aleksandr Bovin met yesterday with Foreign Ministry Deputy Director General Eytan Bentzur to deliver the Russian Government's request. However, Jerusalem is considering the possibility of refraining from holding a festive opening ceremony. If that turns out to be the case, neither U.S. nor Russian representatives will participate. Officials in Jerusalem are not enthusiastic about Russia serving as cosponsor of the talks and prefer to hold direct negotiations.

According to the plan, the delegations will meet in Taba for one day, hold a brief opening ceremony, and set an agenda for the continuation of the talks. The talks will then be resumed after the elections.

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Israel: 'Death Squads' To Pursue People Behind Hizballah Rockets

MM3004105396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 30 Apr 96 p 4

[Report by Mufid 'Awwad: "Peres Orders Formation of Israeli 'Death Squads' To Move to Lebanon To Pursue 'Katyusha Heroes']

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman — Informed Jordanian security sources in Amman revealed yesterday the existence of an Israeli plan to pursue those firing the Katyusha rockets, which gave the Israelis sleepless nights during Israel's recent aggression on Lebanon. The sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that this scheme is being implemented on orders from Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and is based on forming special Israeli death squads whose task is to pursue in Lebanon Hizballah leaders and elements who Israel believes are responsible for firing the Katyusha rockets.

The sources pointed out that the task assigned to these squads is to prepare and pursue these leading figures and elements and to pursue anyone included on the list to eliminate him along the lines of the Israeli death squads formed during the Palestinian intifadah to pursue and eliminate activists. Some of these death squads focused their activities on pursuing elements from Hamas and its military wing represented by the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions.

The sources pointed out that Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres revealed during interviews conducted with him on the occasion of Independence Day the existence of special forces operating as "Katyusha hunters" in Lebanon, and that Peres met a week ago with Israeli correspondents and told them not to publish any information about these forces. [passage omitted]

Israel: South Africa Promises 'Real Action' on Islamic Extremists

TA2904154096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The South African Government promised to take real action in the wake of information that radical Islamic elements such as Hizballah have been operating on its territory. This was stated by the South African ambassador to Israel in a meeting with the deputy director general of the Foreign Ministry. The ambassador conferred with Eytan Bentzur in the wake of this morning's report by Qol Yisra'el that there are five Hizballah bases in South Africa.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the ambassador asserted that the Pretoria government is aware of the serious danger and disclosed that not only Israel but also Arab countries had approached the South African Government to warn it about the activities of the Islamic elements.

Israel: More on Activity To Expedite, Delay Hebron Redeployment

TA2904155596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Minister Yosi Sarid is proposing to the cabinet that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment from Hebron be completed before the May elections. No final decision has been taken on the date of the redeployment, and Jewish residents of the city, backed by the Council of Torah Sages, have launched a campaign aimed at delaying any action until after the elections. In Hebron today was our reporter Mark Weiss:

[Begin Weiss recording] The Jewish community in Hebron is continuing its campaign aimed at delaying any IDF redeployment from the city until after the elections. No date has yet been set for the redeployment, although following last week's decision by the PNC [Palestine National Council] to amend the Palestinian Covenant, the Palestinians expect the redeployment to go ahead as soon as possible. [passage omitted]

The right-wing and religious parties have already come out against the redeployment before the elections, and a special Knesset debate on the issue will take place this week. Today, Agudat Yisra'el's Council of Torah Sages joined the call to delay the redeployment. The prime minister has already rejected a similar call from SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] spiritual leader Rabbi 'Ovadya Yosef, pointing out that the Hebron Jewish community will remain intact and that the IDF will still control the Cave of the Patriarchs.

This morning, a few dozen reserve generals and senior officers from the right-wing Forum for a Strong Israel toured Hebron and also came out strongly against the plans for redeployment. [passage omitted]

Dov Li'or, the rabbi for Qiryat Arba' and Hebron, today joined other Jewish settlers in a day of fast and prayers against the plans for redeployment. [end recording]

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Lebanon: Al-Hariri Holds News Conference

NC2904151696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1357 GMT 29 Apr 96

[News conference by Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri with unidentified correspondents at the Government House in Beirut — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Hariri] Dear brothers; At the beginning of this address and on the second day of the blessed 'Id al-Adha, one must pause in memory of our folks, be they children, women, elderly people, or the youth, whose sacrifice for the sake of Lebanon has reached the highest degree of martyrdom, thus making a short cut toward a real national unity reflecting the nobility of our people and their solidarity in the face of hardships. Greetings in the name of the Lebanese Government and the entire Lebanese people to all those who fell on the land of the south, western al-Biqa', and all other areas. Greetings to the Lebanese Army, the Internal Security Forces, and all the security forces that carried out their national responsibilities as best as they could, offering martyrs that fell in defense of Lebanon, its sovereignty, and dignity. Greetings to the Lebanese media who carried out their role in full in affirming their responsibility for mobilizing all Lebanese without exception in defense of their land and dignity. Greetings to Lebanon's living witnesses who stood fast in the face of aggression and those who were forced by the military operations to leave their villages. Greetings to every family that sustained a wound for the sake of Lebanon. Greetings to the villages whose homes, fields, installations, roads, and memorials were not spared by the machine of aggression and that remained steadfast to become living witnesses to the crimes committed and to the Lebanese right to liberate their land, regain their sovereignty, and rebuild their homeland.

Brothers: Circumstances did not permit the exchange of congratulations on the occasion of 'Id al-Adha, however, these same circumstances must permit us all to exchange congratulations over Lebanon's well-being. We have gone through an extremely tough predicament from which we emerged, both as a regime and a society, stronger than before, more cohesive in the face of difficulties, and more united in living up to the fateful challenges. This in itself is enough to tell the Lebanese in general and the people in the south and in western al-Biqa' in particular: Many happy returns to you, Lebanon, and the south and western al-Biqa'. The black days do not cancel life but, to the contrary, must serve as a motive for clinging tight to this life and defending dignity and the homeland's sovereignty. The rich fields in the south and in western al-Biqa' will produce once again. The good hands in the south, western al-Biqa', and all over Lebanon will go back to rebuilding once again. Nothing can affect our will to rebuild our country and liberate our land, and no power can stop the Lebanese dream of renewing life in this homeland and renewing confidence in its role, regime, and people.

If someone wants to turn Lebanon into sites of debris, we say with the simplicity of those who remained steadfast, were displaced, martyred, or wounded that Lebanon knows how to rebuild itself. The destruction of thousands of homes, the burning of fields, and the damaging of installations, roads, power plants, and others will not stop the cycle of reconstruction that we wanted from the beginning and considered it one of the strongest weapons against aggression and designs targeting Lebanon's renaissance.

Our responsibility toward our people in the south and western al-Biqa' will be up to the level of the sacrifices these people have made, the level of the unity that was demonstrated nationwide, and the level of determination we seek to counter the destruction with more construction.

The martyrs are the martyrs of all Lebanon; the martyrs of the Lebanese state first and foremost. They are the martyrs of the national destiny, who fostered the country's unity with their blood and souls. The Lebanese Government will interpret this into actual deeds and at all the levels that preserve the dignity and rights of the martyrs' families. I declare 18 April, the day of the Qana massacre, a national day of remembering, on which all the Lebanese get together to remember those who have fallen.

The martyrs of the south and western al-Biqa', the martyrs of the Israeli aggression, must live in the Lebanese memory. Their place in history must be maintained in the same way we have preserved the unforgettable memory of the martyrs of 16 May.

With all its institutions, bodies, and political and non-political ranks, the state is responsible for its people and for the damage that has been inflicted, the homes that were demolished, and the fields that were destroyed. No citizen will be left for humiliation. With all the resources available to it, the state will be the first and last line of defense when it comes to defending the dignity of the Lebanese in their homeland. [applause]

I know very well that a homeland with such a stock of patience and steadfastness can never be broken. I know very well that Lebanon will keep up its march, the march of revival, construction, and liberation. I know, just as every Lebanese knows, that the scheme that resisted Lebanon's development has not succeeded. Lebanon

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took the challenge and emerged strong and intact. The coming months will be the best witness to what we say now.

Dear friends: Lebanon has succeeded in stopping the aggression and reached a mechanism to prevent its recurrence. In that, we were assisted by our brothers and friends, particularly President Hafiz al-Asad, who demonstrated his wisdom and genuine thinking to Lebanon once again and proved that he is up to the historic responsibilities and the fateful moments. He did not leave Lebanon vulnerable to the wind, no matter how harsh conditions were, how strong pressures became, or how grave the sacrifices were.

The understanding we have reached is a trust in our hands. We will certainly work to commit ourselves to its requirements to avoid a recurrence of what happened so that we can protect our people in the south and western al-Biqa' and all the areas and confirm our right to restore our land and territorial sovereignty.

We repeat our thanks to the friendly states that stood by Lebanon in its ordeal. We especially thank French President Jaques Chirac, Lebanon's and the Arabs' friend.

We want the chapter of aggression on our land and people to be closed for ever. We want our country to rise and reaffirm its determination to rebuild itself on its own and always with the support of loyal brothers and friends, particularly those who stood by us heart and soul and hence made a deep impression on the various political, social, and diplomatic aspects of life.

The Lebanese government can only reaffirm its categorical principles of peace and its commitment to these principles on the basis of the resolutions of the Madrid conference and the implementation of resolution 425 that provides for the full withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territories.

It can only reiterate the inseparability of the Lebanese and Syrian tracks in any negotiations.

The United States of America, who played a prominent role in reaching the recent understanding, is called on to play an effective role to save the peace process from the climate of war and aggression and return it to the climate of dialogue and negotiations. Thank you.

[Correspondent] It is clear from what you said that there is some kind of active mechanism for action in the coming stage to make up for the big losses caused by the Israeli aggression. Can you give us the information about this mechanism?

[Al-Hariri] Let us look at the battle that the enemy wanted, that Israeli wanted, to understand the real goals underlying it. From the first day of the aggression, we have said two things. The first is Israel's concentration on the attempt to strike at Hizballah. Such matters are not resolved by force. If we know that, I think Israel should know it. The 16 days of fighting, bombardment, and destruction proved us right. It is strange for Israel not to know this. I believe that it knows it very well, maybe even more than we know it and in detail.

However, Israel continued its aggression. It bombarded, struck, killed civilians, destroyed establishments and kept that up. It continued even after Qana massacre. Many of us expected Israel to stop after the horrible massacre that was reported by all mass media and denounced by all, but it did not.

Hence, there is a clear Israeli plot based, not on striking at Hizballah militarily, but on something else. Western propaganda has given Hizballah a certain image. Relying on this image, they started to say from the first day that they wanted to strike Hizballah. They wanted nothing from the Lebanese people because the Lebanese are a peaceful people. They wanted nothing from the Lebanese state because it is a recognized state. They wanted nothing from the Lebanese Army because it is a legitimate army. All they wanted was Hizballah to guarantee that the West and the western media would go along with them. They knew that Hizballah would not be uprooted by force. They started to strike at some places and terrorize the people. They bombarded the areas around Beirut. The area of the Summerland was specified by name. Before Beirut, they bombarded areas around Sidon, al-Nabatiyah, Tyre, and all the areas. They kept up that policy. What was their plan? It was to bombard and urge the people to leave using the excuse of striking at Hizballah and uprooting it by force. Evicting the people forced them to come to Beirut. Things would be confused as long as Hizballah was present with its weapons. As a result of the bombardment, the people left their homes and came here. Hence, things were confused, and accordingly, the whole country's march would be confused.

There are many things that the Israelis failed to realize, or underestimated. The first thing was the unity of the Lebanese. I believe that Israel failed to appreciate how central, important, and cohesive Lebanese unity is.

The second thing is that the state proved its presence and strength in the past few years. No one could tamper with security no matter what. Throughout 16 days of fighting, security remained stable. This was amazing. Usually things go out of hand in any country in a state of war, but this did not happen in Lebanon. Security was maintained, and the country continued to provide all the services.

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[Correspondent] [indistinct question]

[Al-Hariri] This is from the other hand. The idea was to destroy through the exodus. They failed to fully appreciate how the people of the south were capable of absorbing the blow. They thought that as soon as they fired a few shells people would leave everything behind and go. The media reported that many of the bombarded villages were totally ruined, but the people stayed there. No village was totally empty of its people. In some villages a quarter, half, or three quarters of the population left, but some people still remained. They would escape to the fields when the shelling started and return when it stopped to stay under the destroyed homes. They obtained their need for water whatever way possible. They did with the food they had and survived those harsh days. The Lebanese' and the southerners' holding on to their lands and homes was something that the Israeli computer seemingly failed to take into account. The national unity, the steadfastness of the people of the south, the maintained security, and the accumulated strength of the state and its organizations, both security and civilian, all these things were taken by the Israelis to mean nothing. The results were contrary to their expectations.

No one was supposed to remain in the south following the Qana massacre, especially the media, which relayed the massacre in all its details. The pictures were really frightening. Yet the people remained. When we said there were between 400,000 and 500,000 displaced persons, we were telling the truth. However, they were not displaced from the south to other areas. They were displaced to other areas in the south. Some people remained on their lands; others moved somewhere else, others moved around. There was a process of displacement, but most of it was within the south. Of course, some people reached Beirut. Others went to Kasrawan, al-Matn, the north, and al-Biqa' and were well received. National unity was manifested most splendidly.

This is our ammunition for the future, ammunition for Lebanon, for the Lebanese state, and for every Lebanese citizen.

This agreement or understanding that the government reached with the cooperation of the brothers in Syria — who played a prominent role in reaching it — has laid down a mechanism for two things. The first is to prevent escalation. Therefore if there is any incident, the representatives of the countries involved in the agreement, or this understanding, will immediately intervene to prevent any escalation as a result of this incident. On the other hand, a mechanism has been laid down to compensate Lebanon, and not only for the losses resulting from this aggression. You know that Lebanon paid a heavy price for 20 years, and is still paying it to this day. This is why the text — if anyone was aware of it — was not written so as to compensate Lebanon for the losses resulting from the recent operations but to rebuild Lebanon.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct]?

[Al-Hariri] We do not want to mix up matters.

[Correspondent] Your excellency, you spoke about the national unity shown by the population in the first place. Our question is: What is your excellency's policy, as a prime minister, for maintaining domestic cohesiveness among the politicians? Is there a policy?

[Al-Hariri] People ask me this question daily. [laughter] The people are satisfied with the results we have reached. The most important thing is to make this bear fruit.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct]?

[Al-Hariri] Yes. On this occasion, the government and me personally are open to all the political trends in the country. Let us say that the people have taught us to turn a page. The Lebanese people have taught us to turn the page. The people do not want disputes, these small problems and petty quarrels. The population wants the officials to rise to the level of the challenges facing the homeland. I extend my hand to the entire population and am ready for an understanding and cooperation with all the people in the interest of the country and in order to rise to the level reached by the Lebanese people. The Lebanese people have proved that they knows what responsibility means, that they know where their interests lie, and that they have feelings toward the higher national issues.

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister. You said security was maintained throughout the 16 days. But today, just two or three days after the cease-fire, security incidents occurred in the south. Preliminary reports spoke of a clash with medium- and heavy-caliber weapons between two organizations in the south.

[Al-Hariri] We concluded a cease-fire between Israel and the armed groups. We did not conclude a cease-fire among the armed groups.

[Correspondent] But there is the state's role in the south following this agreement, especially as the new agreement differs from the July 1993 understanding in that it notes that the state, which was the principal party involved, has a role. In its capacity as the stronger party, how could the state prevent security incidents like the ones that occurred in the south today — and which could occur again?

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[Al-Hariri] The Lebanese Army is not deployed in the area where the clashes occurred. I have received a report on it. If this indicates anything, it shows that only the state can maintain this security. The organizations, regardless of their awareness and no matter how noble their objectives are...[pauses] the security issue is something else. No one but the state can ensure security.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] what will be the role of the army, particularly since after the understanding [words indistinct].

[Al-Hariri] Look 'Awni, the understanding clearly explains the responsibilities. It specifies that the state is responsible for this understanding with its four points, which everybody is in agreement about. Thus, the state and all its institutions, be they the Army or others, will seek to implement this understanding. One of the issues that Mr. Walid referred to is the state's responsibility, and the state will never abandon its responsibilities. For two gunmen or two armed groups, regardless of their reasons, to terrify the people, fire at each other or fire RPG's is impermissible, and the state will not remain silent about it, never.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] the Lebanese Army was attacked whenever it went to the south [words indistinct].

[Al-Hariri] Now the situation is different. Now people are not against each other. Everybody believes in the same thing. There are no different lines. There may be some small conflicts in practice, but they are impermissible.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Al-Hariri] This is a military issue, but ultimately the state is taking the matter into its own hands. The question of security is the responsibility of the state. The question of this agreement and its implementation is the responsibility of the state, and this is very clear. If it is not implemented, the state will bear the consequences.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Al-Hariri] You know, what kept us busy the most was the question of the return of the people. Not more than 48 hours have passed.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency, you mentioned two points: Nonescalation of [words indistinct] and compensation. As far as nonescalation is concerned, will this mechanism specify areas where observers will be stationed or will they be in al-Naqurah....

[Al-Hariri, interrupting] If you read the agreement you will find that the executive measures will appear in an appendix.

[Correspondent] The second thing concerns compensation. Will this financial compensation be in lieu of the lawsuit which Lebanon is filing?

[Al-Hariri] No that is a separate matter.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Al-Hariri] This is under study from the legal standpoint. This issue is being studied from the legal point of view.

[Correspondent] Staying with the question of the state's role....

[Al-Hariri, interrupting] You still insist on this.

[Correspondent] AL-HAYAH newspaper yesterday featured an interview with a Hizballah official on how to reconcile the role of the state and what you talked about during the news conference to announce the cease-fire—namely, that the state determines the supreme national interests, and the resistance must conform to them. One of Hizballah's officials has stated that resistance to the occupation represents the zenith of the supreme national interests. How can these two views of the supreme national interests be reconciled, particularly since there is an agreement that entails obligations?

[Al-Hariri] I believe that this talk that appeared in AL-HAYAH, which you yourself wrote on the basis of a specific interview, was not very accurate. The resistance is not a goal, but a means toward a goal. When someone says that the resistance is the epitome of supreme national interests it sounds as if resistance is a goal in itself. The goal is liberation. Resistance is just a means. Thus, the supreme national interests are determined by the Government, and I believe that he who told you this knows about this.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency, the goals of the Israeli operation, as is known, were to stop the Katyushas, achieve tranquility on the Israeli side of the border, strike Hizballah or change the rules of the game, but what we saw were strikes against the Lebanese infrastructure and the country as a whole. They did not succeed in striking at Hizballah, but the Lebanese state, with its commitment to and signature on a written agreement that differs from the unwritten July [1993] understanding, has committed itself to guaranteeing a certain calmness. You said before that the resistance will operate within the limits posed by the state, in accordance with its national interests. Will violations of this policy lead, for instance, to strikes by the Lebanese state against the violating groups or to giving orders to respond to the operations carried out?

[Al-Hariri] No. Let me tell you something. We always take the approach that there is an attacker and a victim

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here and that attacking is not always the solution. Things are not resolved by attacks. Why must we always assume that anyone who does something will either attack us or must be attacked by us? There are other means.

I believe that by now those resisting in the south know the limits and their scope of action within them. If there is a violation by any party whatsoever, there is a mechanism for stopping the violation where it is without any escalation. Thus, we must not say that if so and so commits a violation we have to hit him or clash with him.

The question of clashing with the resistance will not happen. So long as Israel is occupying the south there will be no collision with the resistance. This is a settled matter. This is an Israeli demand that we will not implement.

Mistakes, violations, and excesses may take place, but all these things will be resolved. There are many ways to control things, one of which is collision with the resistance. But there are many other ways, which we and the resistance know about, that will enable us to control things without reaching the point of a military collision. Collision with the resistance, I would like to emphasize, is forbidden. The resistance cannot clash with the state and the state does not intend to collide with it. Everybody can coexist within the parameters of the existing understanding.

[Correspondent] Prime Minister, it is being said that there is agreement that there should be no attacks on civilians inside the border [sentence as heard]. Does this mean that military operations will be limited to Israeli military targets? How are these matters being explained?

[Al-Hariri] Let me tell you. It is forbidden to attack civilians. The last time I was asked who benefited by the understanding, I replied: the civilians. We are not specifying where, whether inside the border strip, inside the liberated areas, or inside Israel. Civilians in all those areas have benefited. It is not permissible to kill civilians or any one else. It is forbidden to attack civilians.

[Correspondent] In the third clause of the understanding, there is some misunderstanding over the terms "firing" [itlaq] and "being fired" [intilaq]. In your previous news conference, you used the term "being fired."

[Al-Hariri] Let me tell you this. The understanding was drawn up in English. Stick to the English text. Secondly, the debate over firing or being fired is worthless. If you ask me why, I will tell you because whether it is an act of firing or being fired there will be retaliation. If it is firing, it means that the retaliation can be against this or that specific location. If it is a question of being fired, it means the retaliation can be against the area where the firing was prepared even if it lies outside the immediate area. Now listen to me, retaliation is forbidden. This was discussed. In the first and second clauses, it was stated that if there was gunfire, they would retaliate. These two clauses were then removed. The process is limited to the combatants at the time of the fighting. There is no such thing as reprisals. So, there is no need for us to squabble over terms like "firing" and "being fired".

[Correspondent] It is the Israelis who are creating a debate over these terms. The result is that they might retaliate against the civilians.

[Al-Hariri] The understanding was written in English. There are no Arab or Hebrew versions.

[Correspondent] The French foreign minister announced at noon today that he was going to hold a news conference this afternoon to comment on the formation of the Observers Committee that will supervise the cease-fire. Has Lebanon provided names as possible members for this committee?

[Al-Hariri] No, not yet.

[Correspondent] I have a question on another matter. The Israeli foreign minister announced at noon today that the cease-fire is an interim one and will last for several months. Does this mean that after a few months, matters will return....

[Al-Hariri, interrupting] No, no. We insisted on including this clause, not Israel. We insisted that we can never accept an agreement that is described as temporary but ends up as permanent. We wish to reaffirm this point. The understanding itself emphasizes that the understanding cannot replace the need to search for a peace solution. Hence, we do not want this situation to turn into a semi-permanent arrangement that can last for 20 years. No, we don't want this. This is not a natural situation. The natural thing is for Israel to withdraw, therefore, this understanding was drawn up to serve a short period of time. The conclusion is that at an agreed-upon time, peace negotiations will be resumed so that we can rid ourselves of the occupation and all it entails. It was really Lebanon who insisted on this point, namely because we do not want this understanding to replace UN Security Council Resolution 425 and other UN resolutions.

[Correspondent] What guarantee is there that Israel will not attack Lebanon if such an attack serves electoral purposes. Israel constantly [words indistinct] with and without justification.

[Al-Hariri] If Israel wished to commit aggression and could find reasons for it, then it can always find reasons.

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This is well-known, however, we should not give it justification or behave in a manner that will make it look as if it is our fault. This is one thing. On the other hand, major countries helped formulate this understanding. The United States, France, and Syria took part in addition to Israel and Lebanon. It is supposed to be respected. It was also decided that an agreed-upon time, negotiations will begin to reach a solution that will guarantee Israel's withdrawal from the south and western al-Biqa'.

[Correspondent] The understanding has in practical terms reduced the resistance's ability to confront Israel.

[Al-Hariri] I don't quite agree with you on this point.

[Correspondent] Even, even....

[Al-Hariri, interrupting] Resistance does not consist of firing Katyushas. If the understanding limits the use of Katyushas, these rockets should not be used in the first place. Nor should Israel attack civilians. There is disagreement over who began the attacks, but the result is that attacks on civilians were not allowed even according to the July [1993] understanding. The only difference is that this point was not as clearly specified as it was this time.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct] relative stability based on...

[Al-Hariri, interrupting] Undoubtedly.

[Correspondent, continuing] ...will diminish interest in the situation of the occupation. Through this process, there seemed to be significant international support for Lebanon and its cause. Does the government have a plan to activate this support by reviving its role in negotiations so that we will be able to put pressure... [brief break in transmission]

[Al-Hariri, in progress] ...the other cards in the government's hand, including international pressure, friendships, and world public opinion, to which it has actually become clear that there is a problem called the occupation. The image of Lebanon abroad was that there was a problem called Hizballah. Now it is clear beyond any doubt that the problem is the occupation. Israel is occupying part of our land. This is the cause of all the problems the region is facing. Hence, it was underlined and brought into focus [brief break in transmission].

[Correspondent, in progress] ..to activate that support, through activating the role...[brief break in transmission]

[Al-Hariri, in progress] ...among the priorities in any negotiations that will be held, and the negotiations that will be held soon.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct] a person listening to news or watching the satellite stations sees that the April agreement involves all triumphant parties. No one was defeated. A triumphant party necessarily needs a defeated opponent. Who was defeated?

[Al-Hariri, laughing] I believe the agreement will be implemented. The bombardment was defeated. Do you want me to list those who were defeated? [laughter] The bombardment was defeated, and so was the killing of innocent people and civilians and the idea that problems can be resolved by force. This was defeated. The will of the people who say that nothing can be resolved by force and that a solution must be political has triumphed.

[Correspondent] [Indistinct remarks]

[Al-Hariri] Possibly.

[Correspondent] The mass media reported varying figures, as regards the size of the losses. Is there a specific figure of these losses?

[Al-Hariri] I strongly reproach those who published the figures. They are irresponsibly tampering with the fate of the state. With all due respect, if the government...[brief break in transmission]...the figures, how can someone give specific figures for losses in water, electricity, or others? No one has these figures, except someone who just makes them up. I wish the mass media [pauses] At the meeting of the Higher Relief Committee, I appealed to all not to publish figures haphazardly. We should not tamper with such matters. How can we publish statistics concerning the state without getting them from official sources? We restricted these things to the prime minister. When the prime minister's office publicizes figures, they will be the correct figures. But when somebody says this cost 20, 30, 5, 7, or 8 [unit not specified], he is misleading public opinion. This is an infringement on the state that we do not need.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Al-Hariri] I said Lebanon emerged intact and stronger than ever. This is due to the following reasons. Let us take things one at a time. First of all, you have noticed that all the meetings were held in B'abda with his excellency the president, and after consultations between his excellency the president, Speaker Birri, myself, and the foreign minister. All have noticed the unity of the leaders and the absence of the slightest differences. This was demonstrated clearly from the first day to the last. Nothing was settled until everybody was consulted. Even during the president's travel, we kept in contact with his excellency, to consult on everything.

[Correspondent] Will this continue?

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[Al-Hariri] Yes it will continue. This did not come as a surprise. It was the result of a belief.

Wait a minute. We did not answer the question that is important. The second point is that this fear possibly existed before the understanding, before the agreement. But following the agreement, it is a misplaced fear because, on the one hand, the understanding and unity that appeared at its most splendid in the country, the people's readiness and enthusiasm to continue with the reconstruction and development process, and even the people's return to their destroyed villages to start the rebuilding process — work began after 0400 but there was also work before then — on the other hand, gave an particular image of the country: Namely, that it will never die, and therefore investment in it will be profitable. Some people will certainly wait until there is a peace agreement. Others say: The country is doing well and therefore I want to get involved as of now, so as to start making profits. The pound was not affected.

Another scene happened several days ago when the French foreign minister and I went to visit Bsalim. Some of you were there and witnessed it and others saw it on television. Israeli planes were flying over Bsalim. We saw them. The [French] foreign minister, the press, some officials, and I were there to inspect the area where 350 workers were working with their bulldozers, excavators, compressors, and other machines. Work went ahead, and officials were there while the planes were flying over them. This is the country. A country that does this can never be forced to its knees. Never. The workshops in all Lebanon continued to work, except in the bombarded areas and during the bombardments. Some people were even building roofs during the bombardment of the south. Therefore I believe that, on the contrary, the image of the country that emerged has given a better impression of the country. It also showed a fundamental point. What does the investor fear? He fears that the country will collapse if a problem occurs. Could there be a worse problem? We had 16 days of 24-hour bombardments, displacements, and raids. Then the operation ended. The people went back to their normal life. Of course there were the martyrs and those who suffered permanent disabilities as a result of the bombardment of the south, which I believe constitute the greatest loss for Lebanon. This is the real loss. As for material losses, these can be replaced. The whole world saw that the country is strong and firm and not affected anymore. It saw that the country can absorb any shock. I believe that if this had happened in any other country, its conditions would had been more difficult than ours.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] negotiations and contacts you were involved in to get the cease-fire, it was noted that there were U.S. and Israeli talks about the need to follow the cease-fire with a resumption of the negotiations. Your excellency is also saying that the Lebanese state can only stress the Lebanese and Syrian tracks in any negotiations. Is there a path that leads to the negotiations? Another question, Mr. Prime Minister. Were the two [Lebanon and Syria] asked to discuss undeclared points or secret annexes to the cease-fire?

[Al-Hariri] Let me tell you: It has always been rumored that there are secret annexes to every agreement concluded in the past 100 years between any two countries. True or not? In all agreements. I confirm that nothing outside the framework of this agreement was discussed with us. I do not believe that it was discussed with the others. What is certain is that the way the issue of the negotiations was discussed was included in the understanding. If we are calling this understanding a cease-fire, then why we did talk about the negotiations and the peace issue in a special clause? This means that all issues discussed are there. There is nothing secret. The agreement did not specify that it was a temporary one, but this does not mean it replaces peace and the negotiations that should begin at a time to be agreed on. The words — as soon as possible — could have been written into it, but we did not agree to that. We said: Let us not put them down so as not to give an impression. It is not our fault. It is Israel that stopped them when they began the elections.

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, President Clinton said: We will not be lax with those who violate the agreement. In his message to the president of the Republic yesterday, he reiterated: We have formed the consultative group of the countries for the reconstruction. Only the United States, France, and Italy were mentioned in the agreement of understanding. Can we know which other countries are involved?

[Al-Hariri] No. No. I think that in his message to his excellency the president, President Clinton was speaking as a matter of principle, and not in detail. The details are still being discussed with us — specifically, with me. I would have known had this group been formed. President Clinton is saying in principle that the United States has decided to form the group that will help Lebanon's reconstruction process. In addition to the United States, those mentioned in the agreement are Europe, France, Russia, and any country that would like to join. Of course, what is meant here are Japan, possibly Malaysia and Korea — that is: a number of countries that have the ability to contribute.

[Correspondent] After meeting with you yesterday, Ambassador Jones said that Lebanese diplomacy has won in this case. Could you tell us if this really so?

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[Al-Hariri] I am telling you that the whole world has won but you find it too much to accept that Lebanese diplomacy has won.

[Correspondent] No, what I want to ask is if you share his view, Mr. Prime Minister, that Lebanese diplomacy has won?

[Al-Hariri] There is no doubt that the Lebanese diplomatic establishment was very active. The whole world acknowledges this.

[Correspondent] You mentioned a short time ago that the Israeli elections are drawing near. It is being said that one of the operation's objectives was to bolster Peres' standing in the elections. We also will be facing elections soon. It has also been said that Your Excellency has triumphed in the current diplomatic effort. Are you running in the coming parliamentary elections?

[Al-Hariri] I really believe that no Lebanese, except you, is thinking of the elections at this time. This is not the time for it.

[Correspondent] What is the government's economic development plan like now? In other words, will there be a reassessment of priorities? Will the timetable of projects remain the same as it was before the recent events?

[Al-Hariri] The Israeli operation was very clear. The Israeli message was very clear. Israel sought to undermine the Lebanese Government's plan for the country's revival. If your enemy admits that what you are doing is so right that he is seeking to undermine it, why should you change your plan? It is absolutely clear that Israel is against the Lebanese Government's development plan to the point that it commits aggression to ruin it. Hence I do not think anyone is now questioning the government about its priorities for the country's reconstruction. Furthermore no one discussed this issue with us even in the past. We used to hear criticisms but no one gave us any alternative or said this or that project is wrong and must be handled differently. The latest aggression proves that the government was performing well, so well that Israel sought to undermine its development plan. Israel believes that if this plan is implemented, peace is established, and Lebanon is reconstructed, then Lebanon will be its major economic rival in the Arab world.

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, there has been talk about the resumption of peace negotiations. I do not know if it is true, but it is being said that the Lebanese negotiations will be parallel to the negotiations on the Syrian track. Has this issue been discussed again recently? I mean, it used to be said that Lebanon might wait until there is some progress on the Syrian track.

[Al-Hariri] Let me tell you, some Lebanese are in a hurry and ask why Israel and Syria are negotiating but there are no talks on the Lebanese track. It is not Syria or we ourselves who are determining the course of the negotiations. It is the Americans who are determining the course of the negotiations. They decided that the Palestinian case should be settled first. It is the Americans who are issuing invitations to the talks. No party is initiating negotiations on its own behalf. The Americans also decided to settle the Jordanian case early. They also made decisions and put pressure on some Arab countries to accept visits by Peres and by Rabin before him. Now they have decided they want to hold negotiations between Syria and Israel.

Actually this suits us. Why does it suit us? First of all we have an agreement with the Syrians. Neither Syria nor we will sign a peace agreement with Israel before the other. However, the problems and complications between Syria and Israel are much bigger than the problems and complications between Lebanon and Israel. This is because the nature of the two countries and the dangers that they pose to Israel are different. Where Israel is concerned, Syria poses a strategic military threat. Lebanon does not pose a strategic military threat. This should not shame us. It is a fact, however. Israel views Syria as a military state that can really hurt it in war. We, on the other hand, have a limited military capability, as you saw a few days ago. If what had happened to us had happened to Syria, a war would have erupted, a war whose result no one could have predicted. Israel itself cannot predict the course of such a war nor can it predict the extent of its losses. Nor can Syria predict what losses it would sustain in such a war.

Therefore, we can see that Syria and Israel have different problems from the ones we have with Israel. We have other problems with Israel, but they are less acute. What is happening is this: We have an agreement with the Syrians—about which the Americans have been informed—that the Syrian and Lebanese negotiating tracks should be inseparable. When agreements are reached, however, there will be a separate Lebanese-Israeli agreement and a separate Syrian-Israeli agreement. Syria and Lebanon have separate negotiating delegations with Israel. Still, when the time comes, the signing of the two agreements will take place simultaneously. Hence, we have complete coordination with the Syrians on this matter.

They are trying to settle the additional problems between Syria and Israel until they reach the point where the only problems left are similar to those

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on the Lebanese-Israeli track. When this happens, the Lebanese-Israeli track will move forward. I am not in a hurry. I believe that matters are proceeding on schedule. There is nothing wrong where we are concerned.

We are not in a rush. We do not think it is in our interest to hurry things up. Even if we reach an agreement, we will not sign. We made this clear before witnesses. We will not sign. This is because we do not want to give Israel an opportunity to drive a wedge between us and the Syrians. This is impossible. We will not allow it.

Perhaps Israel and others believed they could provoke a disagreement between us and the Syrians. This will not happen. I was always sure of this, even before I came to power. I was one of those who were against the 17 May [1983] agreement. I was not in the government or an official then. I am fully convinced of this. Therefore, this matter is decided as far as we are concerned.

[Correspondent] Should we expect Christopher to return to the region and to come to Lebanon during his trips?

[Al-Hariri] If you enjoy his presence, we will send him to you. [Laughter]

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Al-Hariri] As I said a short time ago, only 48 hours have elapsed.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Al-Hariri] No. Nothing has happened yet. We are still involved in the return of the people. We have not even buried our martyrs. We will do so tomorrow. Some matters take more time.

[Correspondent] Will you attend the funerals tomorrow?

[Al-Hariri] In principle, no, I will not participate. I do not know yet.

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, [words indistinct] about national unity in south and that the government is extending its hand to all the political trends to cooperate together. Will these words be realized through the formation of a new government that represents those not in it now, a new elections law, or more government interaction with the workers' demands? Let me finish with another question. Will there be a different approach to the issue of the media and the media establishments?

[Al-Hariri] The issue of the government is not under discussion now. Everyone is saying I represent this or that and that this fellow does not represent anyone. The elections are the test. Any talk about the government before the elections is out of place because you would be getting into endless confusion. Does the one with a louder voice or the one who talks more represent the people? Does the one who rejects this course represent them? Does this mean that those who are for and those who are against a certain policy should be in the same government? I believe that no national interest is served by raising this matter. The government is formed as a result of understandings. It does not create understanding. You cannot just form a government and say: I want to create understanding. A government is the result of an understanding. Right? I believe that the elections show who represents the people and who does not. Certainly, the elections will be held on time.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Al-Hariri] He is not talking about changing the head of the government, but about a change of government. Additionally, I said that we have open arms and are ready to cooperate with all the people. Cooperation takes various forms. The government is one of them, but it is not all of it. We have many political trends in Lebanon and a multitude of viewpoints. If you want to include all the trends in the government, then you will need a government of around 250 ministers. The majority of the people who are called the opposition contacted and congratulated us and expressed readiness to cooperate. I did not mention names at the time, but I am saying that I am ready to cooperate with everybody and to turn a new page with everyone. The state can absorb all the people and there is a place for everyone in it. But as to the form of this cooperation, I do not believe that it is limited to membership in the government. One does not have to be in the government to cooperate on several issues. We cannot just say: Either I am included in the government or else I stay outside the regime. This is not right. One can be included in the government, can be outside it, but still cooperate with and support it.

[Correspondent] Is the voice of the opposition being heard?

[Al-Hariri] We have not muzzled anyone. Everyone is talking. Right?

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] if there are violations of the agreement?

[Al-Hariri] You are reading the agreement and I hope that you read a word in English. This word is procedures [previous word in English]. These procedures have not been drawn up yet. You are asking me about them but they have not been drawn up yet.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] the spirit of the agreement?

[Al-Hariri] I am responsible for what I say, not for what others say.

[Correspondent] Will you make moves in the coming stage, if we may call them economic moves, similar to

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the ones you immediately made when the aggression began?

[Al-Hariri] The clause on the consultative group [previous two words in English] is being discussed with the Americans to set a date for a meeting, after we have made the necessary contacts to reach a result satisfactory to Lebanon.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Al-Hariri] No. We are the ones concerned.

[Correspondent] Is there any specific Arab country?

[Al-Hariri] The Arabs are part of those who will be helping. But there are other countries too.

[Correspondent] You paid tribute to the Lebanese media and the role they played during the battles. Does this mean the terms concerning the reorganization of the media will be reconsidered?

[Al-Hariri] Let me tell you something [pauses] you insist on raising this issue. The organization of the media does not mean that we are against the media. Paying tribute does not mean that I had a certain view of the media and then changed it. This is not true. This issue was largely misrepresented and I would not like to get into its details. However, I will say a few words.

A lot was said about Rafiq al-Hariri being against freedom. This is not true. I am telling you that this is not true. It was said that I wanted to oppress freedoms. This is not true; it's a lie. This is totally untrue. We are in favor of the freedom of the media, and in favor of the men of the media, whom we respect and appreciate. I have many friends among the young men who work in the media. The best gatherings I attend involve people working in the media. These gatherings are my favorite. All that has been said is absolutely not true.

We are trying to build a state. We emerged from a war. We are trying to rebuild the state on firm foundations. It is unreasonable to assume that wanting to enforce a certain law means that we are against the media, freedom, or the men of the media. This is not true. Some people say that the chaos should be maintained and that the laws must not be applied. They want to maintain the laxity of the media. We do not want to constrain your freedom of expression. Never. Say whatever you want and discuss whatever you want. The state does not want to control the media; it does not want to restrain freedoms. However, we do not want to be like the states [pauses] Name a single country in the world where the state of the media is similar to what we have here. No country is in the same condition. Let us say that we want to imitate the pattern of the French media — since everybody is happy with our friendship with France. Let us do like France. If we say that we want to raise our media to the level of the French media, does this mean that we infringe on the media or its freedom, or that we are against the men of the media? I think the matter is clear. The French and English media came here and covered events very freely. We want to build a media that matches its counterpart in the most noble democracies in the world. This is a pledge I have made. You will see that this is what we want to do.

The big media establishments are capable of absorbing all the young men working in the media. But let us operate according to certain laws. I accept the French laws. If anything in our laws is contradictory to the French laws, I am prepared to eliminate it. I am hereby pledging, before the media and before the Lebanese, that if there is anything in the Lebanese law or in the instructions the Information Ministry gave that is contradictory to the French, British, or German laws, I personally promise to eliminate it. Here is the minister of information, laughing and agreeing with me.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Al-Hariri] Let us discuss this matter in due time.

[Correspondent] Differences have started to emerge between the Israeli Labor Party and Likud. What if Peres loses in the elections? Will the understanding remain valid?

[Al-Hariri] The Americans undertook an understanding with the Israeli nation. Hence, it has nothing to do with the Israeli parties. It is binding on all.

[Correspondent] President Clinton has once again justified the Israeli massacre in Qana. We are talking about who started firing rockets and who opened fire first. Are we not required to make it clear that it was Israel that began?

[Al-Hariri] The Qana massacre was unjustified. Nobody can justify a crime of this sort. [Addressing the correspondent] Here I am answering you. I cannot speak for him. I speak only for myself and for the Lebanese people. I speak in the name of the Lebanese state, in the name of all those who were martyred, and in the name of all our friends in the world. The Qana massacre was unjustified. Nobody in the world can justify it. You kill 100 or 110 persons in cold blood — there were children and women among them and we saw them on television — and then justify your deed? This is neither acceptable nor justified. No one on the face of the earth can justify the Qana massacre.

[Correspondent] The Israeli foreign minister is saying that the agreement, or the understanding, is temporary, and that the solution is pending negotiations.

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[Al-Hariri] It seems you got here late. I answered that question. This was our demand. We do not accept this understanding as a final solution. If we accept it as final, this means that we agree to leave our lands occupied. We do not accept that. It was a Lebanese demand. The Syrians supported our demand that this can never be final. This is temporary. There is no way we can accept it as the final agreement. The final agreement will be when Israel gets off of our land.

[Correspondent] Do you expect Israel to resume negotiations [words indistinct]?

[Al-Hariri] This depends on Israel. It is Israel — not Arabs — that is unable to resume negotiations at present. The Arabs, Lebanon and Syria alike, have proved beyond doubt that we insist on peace despite all the aggression against us.

Lebanon: Nasrallah Views Cease-Fire Understanding

NC2904184996 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 27 Apr 96 p 3

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General al-Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah has stated that the "spirit and substance of the understanding that halted the Israeli aggression are very good in terms of protecting the Lebanese civilians from the Zionist enemy, safeguarding the Lebanese people's right to resist the occupation, forcing the Zionists to comply with the terms of the understanding in their response to the [resistance] operations, and lifting the naval blockade against the ports and the fishermen."

At a news conference held last night, Nasrallah underlined the "party's commitment to the spirit and substance of the understanding, irrespective of its text, which includes terms that we neither approve of nor believe in." He added: We consider the armed factions to be the most honorable resistance in the world and do not admit that there is a land called Israel, but Palestine. In addition, there are clauses that do not concern us and that relate to the negotiations.

Nasrallah emphasized that there are no restrictions on the resistance activity. He added: What was mentioned about not using populated areas to launch rockets is something that reflects the policy we have pursued for many years. We do not launch rockets from inside villages; accordingly, we consider this clause to be in accord with the resistance movement, he added. He noted that the new understanding is a return to the substance of the July 1993 understanding, but with a mechanism of guarantees. He expressed his belief that the observers' committee and the guarantor states will face a real test upon the first violation by the enemy, stressing that the resistance will not violate this understanding. He noted that Lebanese state must monitor it very seriously and must not be lenient regarding harming any civilian target.

Nasrallah added: The understanding defines what is forbidden, not what is permitted. He noted the understanding has tied the hands of the Israeli enemy and drawn attention to the fact that it was the katyusha that has led to all the understandings. If these understandings are violated once again by the enemy and the world stands silent about it, then the time of the Katyusha will not be over. However, we do not have an obsession with firing Katyusha rockets, but when the world ignored the murder of our children in the frontline villages we had to use this weapon to defend our kin.

Nasrallah noted that the Qiryat Shemona-Beirut comparison of Peres collapsed after the shelling on Tuesday 16 April, for Qiryat Shemona continued to be bombarded after that date while Beirut and the southern suburb were not. He noted that during the aggression some voices were heard that shattered the atmosphere of national unity and wanted to drag us into a verbal confrontation, either because those who made them wanted to insult the resistance or they did not mean what they said; I hope that the latter is true. He added: We will refuse to be dragged into any verbal confrontation, but do not take our silence for weakness; it is faithfulness to the stand of our people and the blood of our martyrs, which obliges us to rise above all. He added: Now that the war is over, I call on the Lebanese to safeguard the atmosphere of splendid unity that we gained during the war. I also call on everybody to avoid competing over political gains, for the victory that we have won belongs to all of us. He added: Let us avoid the language of rushing to harvest political fruits and steer clear of narrow and election-related calculations. Let us live up to the sacrifices of the people and the greatness of the resistance. Let us safeguard our national peace and enhance the achievements made with blood.

Nasrallah announced that the Islamic Resistance mujahidin will stop firing katyusha rockets at 0400 [0100 GMT] today. He called on the displaced persons to return to their villages and homes. He also called on all Lebanese to attend the funeral of the Qana massacre martyrs at a date to be determined in order to further express solidarity and unity against the Israeli aggressor.

Nasrallah read a statement at the news conference in which he said: On 21 April, the Zionist enemy began its fourth invasion of Lebanon and its leaders announced a number of objectives. The most important of these were:

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To prevent the firing of katyushas at the settlements in northern occupied Palestine, to pressure the Lebanese Government to stop the resistance's operations and disarm it, to negate the July 1973 agreement, to gain a free hand to attack Lebanese civilians, and to strike at the infrastructure of the Islamic Resistance and Hizballah. At the same time, the enemy had other objectives, the most important of which were: To achieve the objectives of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit by hitting the resistance in order to isolate Lebanon from Syria, to impose conditions on Lebanon, and to contain and isolate Syria to help in pushing it into a peace on Israeli terms.

He asked: Which of these declared and hidden objectives has the enemy achieved in these 16 days, which is twice the duration of the July 1993 invasion?

He said: The enemy returned to destroy houses and buildings, damaging them and the crops, displacing more than 300,000 civilians, and committing several massacres of innocent people.

He added: In return, the Islamic Resistance retaliated for the attacks on Lebanese civilians by targeting the Zionist settlers in northern Palestine and displaced a majority of them. It turned the settlements into a devastated land where it would be difficult to live.

More than 100,000 left the settlements and more than 2,000 settlement units were destroyed, in addition to a number of factories. This is in addition to the huge economic damages and losses. A number of people there were killed and wounded.

Despite the imbalance between the two sides' firepower, the losses in northern occupied Palestine were very great.

Nasrallah went on to say: On the military level:

Not a single katyusha launching pad was hit throughout the aggression. There was not a single martyr among the fire support units tasked with firing the rockets. Thirteen muhajidin were martyred during the aggression while undertaking various missions, moving in their vehicles, during field clashes in the western al-Biqa', and also during random artillery bombardments. The katyushas continued to fall on the settlements in northern Palestine without the aggressor being able to stop them.

He added: On the other hand, the official Lebanese stand throughout the aggression has remained committed to the Lebanese people's right to resist the occupation and to use weapons against the Zionists occupying our territories in the south and the western al-Biqa'.

The Zionist enemy has been compelled to make a commitment not to attack civilians.

The fourth point is that the aggression inflicted no damage on the infrastructure of the Islamic Resistance. On the contrary, this infrastructure is withstanding, confronting, and moving with unmatched effectiveness to this moment. Its experience has been enhanced and its confrontation capabilities consolidated. The enemy has not succeeded in barring communication among the struggling individuals who took part in standing up to aggression in all spheres, specializations, and weapons.

On the other hand, he said — and as a result of the daring resistance, the magnificent steadfastness, the national unity, and the official Lebanese coordination with Syria — the political goal of the aggression that bet on cornering Lebanon and dealing with it individually has been aborted.

Hence, and in addition to the bad impact the massacres committed against innocent people in Qana, al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, Suhmur, and al-Hinniyah have left on the image of the Israelis before world public opinion, European, Arab, and Islamic states rushed to Damascus to condemn the Zionist aggression and put forward a number of initiatives to end the existing situation and practically do away with the effectiveness [mafa'il] of Sharm al-Shaykh by declaring solidarity with the Lebanese people and their right to resist the occupation, making a distinction between that and what the American and Zionist propaganda describes as terrorism.

He added: Hence, you will find that the goals of the Israeli aggression on Lebanon, and its people have collapsed totally. Peres, the candidate, failed to put his hand on the winning electoral card by keeping up his aggression, therefore, he had to fall back.

Nasrallah believes that the most important reasons underlying the failure of the recent Israeli aggression on Lebanon are the following:

— The firm stance of the Islamic Resistance and its courageous steadfastness;

— Our dear southerners' determination to stand fast and decide their own fate in the south and western al-Biqa';

— The magnificent Lebanese national unity that was demonstrated by all the Lebanese; a thing which reflected on the Lebanese official stance and its commitment to its national principles; and,

— Syria's firm position embodied in President Hafiz al-Asad's wise and courageous management of the issue since he was aware of the objectives of the Israeli aggressions in Syria and Lebanon.

Nasrallah appreciated the stance of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the clear disparity between the European

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positions, particularly the French, and the American and Israeli positions. He denounced the U.S. bias toward the Israeli enemy.

He affirmed that the resistance will continue until it realizes its goals, God willing. As for what has been destroyed, the Jihad al-Bina' [construction struggle] Institution will undertake its responsibility to reconstruct the country without delay in cooperation with governmental and nongovernmental organizations, he said.

Lebanon: Hizballah Aide—Ability To 'Operate Freely' Not Affected

MM2904133696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 28 Apr 96 p 3

[Report by Walid Shuqayr: "Hizballah: State's Participation as Party to Agreement Does Not Affect Resistance's Ability To Operate Freely"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Beirut — Al-Hajj Husayn al-Khalil, political aide to Hizballah's secretary general, has said that the party's leadership has received the official text of the understanding reached the day before yesterday in the Syrian capital. In a statement to AL-HAYAH he pointed out that the Syrian leadership had handed the official text of the agreement to the party, since "its leadership had participated — through meetings and contacts with Syrian officials since the beginning of last week — in discussing the clauses of the agreement. Syrian officials were eager to consult with [Secretary General] Hasan Nasrallah, al-Khalil, and other leading members through meetings with Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and other Syrian officials." [passage omitted]

On the political results of Operation Grapes of Wrath, he said that "Israel failed to hit the party's infrastructure, stop the Katyusha attacks during the aggression, disarm Hizballah, put pressure on society and the government by evacuating people, or separate the resistance from the people. On the contrary, it backfired, and there has been internal political unity."

Asked whether the state's participation as a party to the understanding imposes obligations on the opposition, he said: "It has no effect on the resistance's ability to operate freely."

Asked about the meaning of the state's participation in this understanding, he told AL-HAYAH that the Americans explained this at the end of the text of the understanding, which stipulates that "it is acknowledged that this understanding to end the current crisis between Lebanon and Israel cannot be an alternative to a permanent solution.... The United States proposes that negotiations between Syria and Israel and between Lebanon and Israel resume on an agreed date with a view to achieving a comprehensive peace."

Al-Khalil added: "This understanding is a prelude to resuming the negotiations in a stable atmosphere. It has nothing to do with the resistance's ability to operate freely." [passage omitted]

Lebanon: SLA Commander Releases Detainees From al-Khiyam Prison

NC3004073896 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0700 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] South Lebanese Army [SLA] commander Staff Major General Antoine Lahd has issued a decision releasing a number of detainees from al-Khiyam prison on the occasion of the blessed 'Id al-Adha. Our correspondent reported that the release of the detainees will take place today.

Lebanon: Israeli Planes Stage 'Mock Raids' Over Tyre

NC2904093996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0900 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] After a 24-hour hiatus, Israeli warplanes resumed their sorties over the south, conducting low-level flights and staging mock raids over Tyre this morning. Israeli planes also overflew Sidon this morning.

Lebanon: PSP Criticizes Christopher's Security Detail

NC2904100796 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 26 Apr 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source in the Progressive Socialist Party [PSP] has denounced U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's insistence on adopting special security measures during his visit to Lebanon.

In a statement yesterday, the PSP source said: The great, awaited guest, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, visited Lebanon yesterday. After political maneuvering, propaganda tactics, and wide-ranging and high-level contacts, he condescended and visited our country while Israel was expanding its aggression and inflicting further material and human losses.

Despite all the [Lebanese-Syrian] security measures taken yesterday and Lebanon's eagerness to make the visit a success, the U.S. official insisted on special security measures, which were implemented by his bodyguards, who carried Israeli weapons and used sniffer dogs in the operation.

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The source added: We denounce this arrogant behavior, which is another insult to Lebanon. We are now more convinced that the U.S. stance tallies with Israel's stance. We ask: Is this the way the U.S. Administration shows its desire to enhance the Lebanese State's role and reactivate its machinery?

Lebanon: 'Grapes of Wrath' Seen as End to 'U.S. Monopoly' in Middle East

MM2904113496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 28 Apr 96 p 9

[Article by Walid Abi-Murshid: "The Peace After the 'Grapes of Wrath'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The peace with Lebanon and Syria after operation "Grapes of Wrath" will not be an Israeli peace.

While, in Lebanon, the aftermath of 24,000 artillery shells and 600 air raids in 16 days was martyrs, injured people, ruin, and displacement, in Israel it is measured according to a formula which goes beyond civilian and economic statistics to the political usefulness of the operation as a whole.

From the usefulness perspective, the political leadership in Israel must admit — albeit implicitly — that operation "Grapes of Wrath" has ended, militarily, with just a facelift for the (July 1993) "Katyusha agreement." The attempt by Shim'on Peres' government to wrest political advantage does not change the fact that it is converting a verbal understanding into a written agreement. Not only are its broad lines the same, but the Lebanese people's right to resist the occupation in the border strip now implicitly enjoys U.S. approval, whatever the conditions imposed on — or required from — this resistance.

Also, from the perspective of the usefulness of operation "Grapes of Wrath," the Israeli political leadership must recognize the realistic limitations of "gunboat diplomacy" even toward a small, weakened state like Lebanon. This operation has revealed the failure of Israel's military pressure to impose a new "fait accompli" to use to its advantage in the forthcoming peace negotiations with Lebanon and Syria. It may have also revealed the failure of the Israeli military establishment to reliably achieve, henceforth, the political establishment's objectives.

The most negative result in the Israelis' assessment of the usefulness of operation "Grapes of Wrath" may be that the operation revealed the United States' inability to come up alone with a unique formula for a new Middle East, even in the wake of the single leadership of the post-Cold War world. Although the Israeli blackout on the European — or rather more precisely French — role went as far as denying any French participation in the cease-fire decision, the French participation imposed its presence on the solution from the start. Through Foreign Minister Herve de Charette's diplomatic efforts and President Jacques Chirac's telephone contacts, the French initiative managed to make the United States amend the clauses of its biased first initiative and make Israel accept another Western mediator apart from the United States.

In this very context, French proposals for a mechanism to monitor the cease-fire take on a future dimension which is likely to become one of the diplomatic constants in the Middle East. The fact that all sides involved in the Middle East crisis have accepted an observation committee which includes France and the United States besides Lebanon, Israel, and Syria and is entrusted with the task of ensuring the proper implementation of the cease-fire agreement, is a unanimous acknowledgment that France is present in the region, and that it is there to stay.

Hence the conclusion can be reached that the most serious flaw in Israel's plans for its aggression against Lebanon is that operation "Grapes of Wrath" will go down in history as the beginning of the reversal of the U.S. monopoly over the Middle East peace process and the end of the understanding of "Israeli peace" in the region.

Lebanon: Hizballah Leader on Cease-Fire Prospects

96SM0261A Sao Paulo FOLHA DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 21 Apr 96 p 3

[Interview with Hizballah leader Nawwaf al-Musawi by Igor Gielow in Harat Hurayk, Lebanon on 20 April: "We Do Not Accept the Word 'Cease-Fire'"—received via Internet]

[FBIS Translated Text] **Hizballah (Party of God) will continue its struggle against Israel until southern Lebanon has been vacated by Shim'on Peres' troops, regardless of a cease-fire—which was being negotiated in Damascus yesterday.**

"We do not accept the word 'cease-fire.' Israel is the aggressor, and it is operating in a Lebanese area as if that area belonged to it," FOLHA DE SAO PAULO was told by one of Hizballah's five top leaders, Deputy Nawwaf al-Musawi, 34.

He was speaking inside the Hizballah communications center in the Harat Hurayk area southeast of Beirut. That center is one of the headquarters maintained by the group, which is also a political party with 12 deputies in the Lebanese Parliament.

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Roadblocks

To reach that headquarters, it is necessary to pass through roadblocks manned by the Lebanese Army, the Syrian Army (which maintains troops in Beirut) and, finally, Hizballah's sentinels.

The Harat Hurayk neighborhood has children playing in the street and an active commercial life, but its position as a preferred target for Israeli attacks makes the tension visible.

When approached on the street, residents say they do not know the location of any Hizballah buildings. This in front of the gate and barricade protecting the permanent home of Ayatollah Falabdullah—the group's top spiritual leader.

Simplicity

The headquarters visited by FOLHA DE SAO PAULO was simple, with posters of Ayatollah Khomeyni, Islamic fundamentalism's ideologist, on the wall. The room once used as an office by Shaykh 'Abbas al-Musawi had plaques honoring him on the wall. He was the leader of Hizballah until February 1992, when he was killed in an Israeli air attack in which his wife and son also died.

Nawwaf al-Musawi, who was interviewed yesterday, claimed to be related, but did not say how. He is one of Hizballah's deputies and belongs to the Political Council, a quasi-secret body that determines the group's methods of action.

According to al-Musawi, the council has "a little over 10 members." He is one of its five most powerful members.

Al-Musawi, who sports a well-groomed beard and wears glasses, answered our questions in a leisurely Arabic that was translated by his secretary and cousin, Ibrahim al-Musawi.

Here is that interview, which was granted between 1300 hours and 1340 hours yesterday (0700 hours and 0740 hours in Brasilia)

[Gielow] What do you think of the proposals being negotiated for the cease-fire?

[Al-Musawi] In the first place, we do not accept the word "cease-fire." Israel is the aggressor, and it is operating in a Lebanese area. "Cease-fire" is a word that suggests an equality of forces, something that is not the case.

But we will stop shooting if they do. Nobody wants violence. To win votes in an election, (Israeli Prime Minister) Shim'on Peres put civilian bodies in the ballot boxes. We do not want violence, but we also will not stop struggling until Israel leaves Lebanese territory.

[Gielow] Does that include using people on suicide missions?

[Al-Musawi] Our mission obliges us to use every means.

[Gielow] Would Hizballah accept an agreement in writing?

[Al-Musawi] We are not going to sign anything—we are not going to legitimize the occupation of southern Lebanon. What we do want are guarantees that Israel will no longer attack civilians and kill people in ambulances and refugees. Israel must be condemned.

[Gielow] Isn't peace difficult without a formal agreement?

[Al-Musawi] We have the right to resist, and there is no discussion about that. From July 1993, when we reached the first agreement, through 30 March of this year, Israel violated the agreed terms 231 times: 69 Lebanese civilians died, and 365 were injured. In addition, 631 people lost their homes, and we are helping them rebuild.

Of those 231 attacks, we responded to 18 using Katyushas, killing two Israelis and injuring 41. Remember, it is Israel that is occupying southern Lebanon.

[Gielow] Speaking of Katyushas, how did they get to you?

[Al-Musawi] (Laughter and comments in Arabic—everybody knows they come from Iran by way of Syria) It is hard to talk about that. We are at war, and seeking assistance is legitimate.

[Gielow] Assuming that Israel leaves the security zone, what will be the relationship between Hizballah and Rafiq al-Hariri's government?

[Al-Musawi] Although everyone thinks it is a dangerous group of extremists, Hizballah is a political party and leads a good share of the Lebanese people.

Look at what happened today in the streets around here (he was referring to Hizballah's distribution of mattresses from Syria to refugees from the southern part of the country). We are working. We have welfare roles in the areas of health, culture, and education.

And we have 12 deputies (the National Assembly has 128 in all). That makes us important on the political map of the country.

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Syria: Al-Asad Role in Lebanon Cease-Fire Praised

JN3004063996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 30 Apr 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Al-Asad, the Nation's Great Leader," AL-BA'TH discusses President Hafiz al-Asad's wise and courageous leadership of the nation in times of hardship, as well as his unrelenting efforts to safeguard its rights and interests.

The paper says: Once again, President al-Asad proved that he is the nation's man. The nation pins great hopes on him to protect its rights and interests and save it from ordeals, tragedies, and conspiracies. The nation also depends on President al-Asad to lead it to a safe haven and achieve its legitimate objectives of victory and liberation.

AL-BA'TH adds: This is a simple, yet profound truth that is clear to all. This truth has characterized the president's national and pan-Arab struggle march since the launch of the glorious Corrective Movement 25 years ago. This truth has also been evident during various developments and changes in the Arab region, especially at critical junctures in our history, such as the glorious October war, the successive Zionist invasions of Lebanon, the second Gulf war, and the peace process.

AL-BA'TH says: Throughout these developments, al-Asad's Syria has been the nation's safety valve and steadfast bulwark. Syria has also been the primary decisionmaker in issues relating to removing threats, confronting hostile schemes, defending pan-Arab security, and embodying the hopes and aspirations of the Arab masses.

AL-BA'TH asserts that Israel's ugly and treacherous aggression against Lebanon confirmed the above facts, not only at the regional level, but also at the international level. Israel launched a fierce and barbaric aggression against Lebanon in which it had qualitative and quantitative superiority. Israel used the most sophisticated and most lethal tools of murder and destruction in the U.S. arsenal. Israel also received unlimited U.S. political and military support. Despite all this, the Syrian Arab position on the aggression — coupled with Lebanon's heroic steadfastness — was the cornerstone in foiling Israel's objectives and preventing it from picking the fruit of the aggression.

AL-BA'TH adds: President Hafiz al-Asad's management of international efforts to bring about a cease-fire was very skillful and competent. The Israelis sustained one of the harshest defeats throughout their long conflict with the Arab nation, as they themselves have acknowledged. The aggression was an utter failure. Lebanon, on the other hand, emerged victorious and self-assured. Despite the many victims and huge material losses, Lebanon emerged more self-confident and more committed to its positions and principles. Lebanon refuses to give up its land and national rights.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Lebanon's harsh experience confirms beyond a doubt that the Arab nation is still in good shape and that it is an active nation. Conspiracies, ordeals, and attacks make this nation stronger and more steadfast, as long as it is led by a brave, unyielding leader who safeguards its existence and who is determined to continue the victorious struggle march until he achieves the masses' objectives of victory and liberation.

Syria: Radio—Lebanese Resistance Emerges 'Stronger'

JN2904162396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1136 GMT 29 Apr 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Sixteen days after the barbaric Israeli aggression against Lebanon, mediation succeeded in reaching a cease-fire agreement based on a formula that maintains the Lebanese national resistance's legitimate right to struggle toward liberating the occupied part of Lebanon and leaves for it the duty of what was supposed to be the United Nation's duty according UN Security Council Resolution 425. This resolution commits Israel to withdrawing from Lebanese territories beyond the recognized international borders.

The cease-fire agreement is commendable and important. However, it cannot whatsoever be an alternative to real peace. The cease-fire is nothing but a procedure, which, no matter how long it lasts, will remain subject to collapse at any moment as long as the cause exists and the reasons that generated the explosion and fanned the fire remain, portending a return to confrontation and resumption of bloody conflict with all the dangers it poses to peace in the region and the world.

Three days into the cease-fire, perhaps we should wonder: Was the Lebanese national resistance the only target of the Israeli aggression? Or, did the aggression target the whole of Lebanon, the Lebanese formula, Lebanon's contribution to civilization and the regional economy?

There is no doubt that the Lebanese national resistance — which kept Israel sleepless, and brought terror and worry to the inhabitants of its settlements on the Lebanese borders — was one of the most important targets of the Israeli aggression. However, it was not

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the only target. Israel's grudge against the resistance represents part of its grudge against Lebanon, which succeeded in overcoming the ordeal that shook it throughout 17 years. Israel played a major role in fabricating this ordeal, fueling it, and fanning its fire.

In retrospect, we find that Israel's aggressions against Lebanon throughout the days of its ordeal used to abate and stop at times when fighting between the Lebanese factions was at its peak. However, it did not take long for Israel to resume its aggressions with greater voracity whenever it felt the fighting had abated; that there was hope on the horizon of a halt in fighting among the brothers; that Lebanon would regain its strength; that the factors of its people's cohesion and deeply rooted unity and solidarity were so strong and firm that they could not be undermined by hurricanes, and so deeply entrenched that they could not be uprooted by the strongest of cyclones.

Israel exerted efforts and spent money in a bid to tear Lebanon apart and turn it into statelets at war with each other and warring tribes that lack all elements of dialogue and have no language of dialogue among themselves other than the language of the rifle and the gun.

This is why Israel was shocked to see Lebanon responding positively to fraternal Syria's efforts, renouncing the language of arms, and returning to reasonable dialogue. It was also appalled to see Lebanon restoring its institutions, achieving amity, restoring cohesion to its sons' ranks to reconstruct what was destroyed of its facilities during the crisis years, and attracting businessmen and capital.

Based on this, Israel's rancor against Lebanon was crystal clear in the Grapes of Wrath operation which was full of hatred, anger, and resentment. Through its extensive raids, its criminal bombardment of residential areas and public facilities, and the resulting heavy material and human losses, Israel sought to instigate the Lebanese people against the Lebanese resistance, and consequently, to dismember and fragment Lebanon to return it to internecine fighting. However, its brutal and treacherous aggression strengthened cohesion among all sects of the Lebanese people and enhanced their faith in their homeland's unity. Thus, they foiled Israel's objectives. In fact, through their steadfastness, they proved to Israel that they all support the resistance and constitute its strategic reserve which strengthens the resistance and reinforces its ranks.

It is clear that Israel does not read history; neither does it learn from its lessons. If it read history and learned lessons it would realize that the force of falsehood, regardless of how strong it maybe or how long it may last, is doomed to founder on the solid rock of right. Had the force of falsehood been able to settle battles in its favor, the current biggest power in the world would not have failed in front of Vietnam's steadfastness although it possesses the most sophisticated and destructive war machine; Algeria would not have become independent; colonialism, despite its brute force, would not have left east and west Asia and Africa; and it would not have failed to stand fast in the face of the will of liberation which destroyed and uprooted it.

At any rate, Israel should not falsely believe that it is an exception to the course of history. Peoples cannot be coerced, and the Lebanese nationalist resistance, which it used to brand with terrorism, emerged from the aggression stronger and firmer. It wrested recognition and its right to confront the Israeli aggression which is embodied by the continued occupation of southern Lebanon. If Israel really cares about its security, it has no choice but to abide by UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425. If the United Nations cares about its credibility and the world peoples' respect for it, it has no choice but to force Israel to implement its resolutions and abide by its charter. We do not believe that by supplying Israel with the most sophisticated weapons in its arsenal, the United States can reinforce conviction in its honesty and the soundness of its stand, or put an end to Israel's belligerence and the danger it poses to peace.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Government Forces Attack Taleban Positions

LD2804092896 Tehran IRNA in English 0736 GMT 28 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Apr 28 (IRNA) — Afghan Government jet fighters Saturday [27 April] twice bombarded Taleban positions south and southwest of Kabul.

Confirming the air raids, the Afghan Defense Ministry said the warplanes pounded enemy troops at Chahar Asiab, Rishkhor, Kheirabad, Sangneveshteh, and Golbagh.

Troops loyal to Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani also shelled the trenches of the Taleban militia in Chahar Asiab, 125 km to the south of Kabul, the source added.

The Afghan Defense Ministry, without going into details as to the number of casualities, disclosed that the attacks were in retaliation to Taleban assaults on residential and commercial areas in Kabul staged two days ago, killing six civilians and injuring 20 others.

Since last autumn, the Taleban has taken positions south and southwest of the Afghan capital. the group has launched a number of offensives aimed at capturing Kabul but each time its forces were repelled by government troops.

A recent announcement disclosed that the Taleban, under certain conditions, was ready to withdraw from its positions in the vicinity of Kabul. However, another statement by a spokesman of the group denied such reports.

Afghanistan: Jam'iyat-e Eslami Official on Power Sharing, Afghan Islam

LD2904151496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The participation of all jihadi forces in political power, as well as in joint efforts for the solution of current problems, are the means to solve the country's present problems. In making this point Enayatollah Shadab, the secretary general of Jam'iyat-e Eslami [Islamic Society], criticized jihadi parties for fighting, according to a report by the central news unit from Kabul. Shadab described the victory of the mojahedin as the cause of Islam's development in Afghanistan. Noting attempts by the superpowers to stall the development of Islam in Afghanistan and to give the Islamic movement in the world a bad name, Shadab added: The superpowers through this method try to crush liberation and religious movements in Asia and Africa.

Afghanistan: Artillery Exchanges Intensified Around Kabul

LD3004113196 Tehran IRNA in English 1033 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, April 30, IRNA — The exchange of artillery and heavy gunfire between the Taleban and forces loyal to President Borhanoddin Rabbani intensified around Kabul during the past two days.

Confirming increased artillery attacks on Sang Nebeshteh, Chehel Sotun and the heights of Khayrabad, Golbagh and Chahar Asiab, Afghan Government military sources accused the Taleban militia of initiating these battles in an attempt to change the situation in the warfronts.

Due to the failure of Taleban forces to occupy new areas, the two sides have attacked each other's positions with heavy gun fire, the sources said, adding however that no casualty reports are yet available.

Meanwhile, the Taleban has dismissed reports that it is responsible for the intensification of war around Kabul, saying that their forces have only been defending their positions and responding to the fire of government troops.

A Taleban spokesman announced last week that they have no plans of attacking the capital city and would only defend against possible attacks by the government.

The Afghan Government announced earlier that it had been planning a large-scale ambush to repulse Taleban forces from the vicinity of Kabul but the attack has so far been postponed for undeclared reasons.

Government sources also claimed that in the past 24 hours, the Taleban, using long-range weapons, shelled residential areas in the west of Kabul. No reports were released on the number of casualties.

Independent news sources have not confirmed the claims made by the two sides, each accusing the other of intensifying the attacks.

The sound of artillery shellings and consecutive explosions were heard throughout the capital on Monday [29 April].

India

India: 3 Intruders From Pakistan Killed; Explosives Seized

BK3004091396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, three militants who had intruded from Pakistan into the

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Indian territory in the Samba sector were killed in an encounter with the BSF [Border Security Force] around midnight last night. Nineteen kilograms of RDX explosives, two AK [as heard] rifles, eight time pencils, and one wireless set, and a large quantity of other ammunition were recovered from their possession. The BSF spokesman told our Jammu correspondent that recovery of the deadly explosives proves that these militants wanted to create disturbances in the state during the coming elections. The IG [inspector general], BSF, Jammu Frontier, Mr. R.S. Mehta, has said that security along the border has been tightened in view of the increased attempts of intrusion by Pakistan-trained militants. Thirty Pakistani intruders have been killed in the last three months in Jammu region in encounters with the BSF.

India: 'Strong Protest' Lodged Against Pakistani Envoy's Remarks

BK2904161696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi has termed the Pakistani high commissioner's remarks on elections in Kashmir as provocative and unacceptable and an interference in India's internal affairs. The high commissioner, Mr. Riaz Khokhar, was summoned to the Foreign Office today to intimate India's strong protest over the issue by the foreign secretary. It was conveyed to him that Indian public opinion is outraged over the remarks. Taking strongest exception to the substance and tone of the remarks, Mr. Riaz was also told that they are not in keeping with the status of foreign representatives in India.

In a statement, the official spokesman said it has been reiterated to the high commissioner at the meeting that the problem in Jammu and Kashmir is interference and armed intervention from Pakistan. Despite constant intimidation, a large number of candidates have come forward to contest the elections and there is total popular support for the democratic process. Mr. Riaz Khokhar was told that India is in no need of advice from outside, least of all from Islamabad on how to conduct elections. New Delhi dismissed the Pakistani charge that the elections will be rigged by pointing out that international opinion will not be deceived by such propaganda.

The spokesman said Pakistan's own strategy of fomenting violence and strife in the valley is fully exposed and India's policy of complete transparency needs no reiteration. The high commissioner was also reminded of the repeated efforts by India to resume dialogue with Pakistan, but there is no progress because Islamabad has refused to respond despite its professed adherence to the Simla Agreement. The statement said Pakistan's refusal has led to lack of any meaningful exchange in recent years.

Various political parties have sharply reacted to Mr. Riaz Khokhar's comments on elections in Kashmir. They said it is a blatant violation of international diplomatic norms and an interference in India's internal affairs. A spokesman of the Indian National Congress, Mr. Devendranath Dwevedi, said the unfortunate comment is against the interest of friendly relations between New Delhi and Islamabad. Demanding the recall of Mr. Riaz Khokhar by Islamabad, the Janata Dal spokesman, Mr. Jaipal Reddy, said it is only Pakistan, which is trying to prevent a fair elections in Kashmir by sending in trained militants from across the border. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in a statement in New Delhi demanded that the government should declare Mr. Khokhar persona non grata and ask him to leave the country immediately. In Ahmedabad, the party president, Mr. L.K. Advani, said that the government should take serious note of the high commissioner's anti-India outburst. The Panthers Party president, Professor Bhim Singh, also criticized the provocative and nondiplomatic language used by Mr. Khokhar on the eve of Kashmir elections.

India: PTV Reports Mounting Tension in Kashmir Ahead of Elections

BK2604144696 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 26 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tension in held Kashmir valley is mounting with Kashmiris' opposition to the farcical Indian elections growing day by day. Indian authorities have directed the military high command in occupied Kashmir to extend elaborate security umbrella to candidates in elections to Lok Sabha seats. There have been little electioneering activities in the valley following threats from mujahideen, who have vowed to make it an exercise in futility for India. Fearing mujahideen's attack, candidates have been provided bulletproof cars with two bodyguards each along with two armed escort vehicles. The governor of occupied Kashmir, Krishna Rao, has sent an SOS message to the Indian Government, asking for more troops to cope with the difficult situation resulting from the people's hostility toward elections.

In the wake of popular resentment against the sham elections, Indian forces have intensified their brutal operations against Kashmiris. In order to send a wave of terror in the civilian population to coerce them into accepting the unpopular elections, Indian troops are resorting to increasing custodial killings of the youth. At least four youths were brutally murdered when in custody in Pulwama, Asli Kadal, Chowdora, and Birbagh. Mujahideen have accelerated their operations

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against Indian forces, inflicting heavy casualties at various places in the held valley.

India: Repolling Begins in Selected Areas

BK3004045996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Repolling has begun in 447 polling stations in Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. Repoll has been ordered in these stations following complaints of malpractices during the first round of assembly and Lok Sabha elections on Saturday last [27 April]. Booths where votes are being cast again include the entire Nowgong assembly constituency, comprising 129 booths in Assam. Repolling in this constituency was ordered because of misprinting of ballot papers.

More than four lakh voters are eligible in today's exercise, which began at 0700 this morning and will continue till 1700 in the evening. Security arrangements have been stepped up for smooth repolling in all these stations. According to the Election Commission, 29 Lok Sabha seats are involved in the repolling process. The state-wise breakup of revoting ordered is Assam, 225 booths, including 129 in Nowgong and 96 elsewhere; Andhra Pradesh, 176; Haryana, 26; Rajasthan, 15; Tamil Nadu, four; and Karnataka, one.

Our Vijayawada correspondent reports that right from the morning brisk free polling is taking place in all the booths. The highest number of 33 polling stations are in Ongole constituency and the lowest of one in Nellore constituency. Our Madras correspondent has reported that repolling is on in four booths in Tamil Nadu.

Meanwhile, campaigning for the second phase of polling for the Lok Sabha and assemblies in 17 states and union territories on Thursday [2 May] ends this evening. The second phase will cover 204 Lok Sabha and 223 assembly seats. There are about 6,000 candidates for the Lok Sabha seats. These include the president of the Indian National Congress, Mr. Narasimha Rao; the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee; the Janata Dal leader, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan; and the president of the Indira Congress-Tiwari, Mr. N.D. Tiwari.

Originally the second phase of polling was to cover 202 Lok Sabha and 224 assembly constituencies, excluding six assembly by- elections. Election in Nalgonda Lok Sabha constituency in Andhra Pradesh has been postponed to the 27th of next month due to administrative problems and polling in Modakurichi assembly constituency in Tamil Nadu deferred to 1 June because of the same reason. Polling in three Lok Sabha constituencies in Uttar Pradesh has been advanced for the 2nd of next month from the 7th in view of a local festival.

India: Laloo Yadav Election Efforts Viewed

96AS0015E Varanasi AJ in Hindi 29 Mar 96 p 8

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Laloo Prasad Yadav, national president of the Janata Dal [JD] and Bihar's Chief Minister, is suddenly surrounded by challenges. Since the inception of the Lok Sabha election campaign, the Central Bureau of Intelligence [CBI] inquiry into the cattle scandal has worried him the most. He is in despair and defensive. This condition is not a welcome sign for him in the days to come. His style has always been to go on the offensive and keep the opposition under control. He has, however, initiated restoring his diminishing offensive style with the aid of the reservation [for selected castes] issue in the Panchayats [village councils]. The Patna High Court has rejected the state government sponsored scheme of reservations for the elections. Laloo Prasad has announced his intention to take the issue to the Supreme Court and to place the issue before the backward class of voters. Social justice is fast becoming the main election manifesto. To match the cattle scandal the JD has the hawala scandal [involving other parties' national leaders] in its pocket.

The JD hopes that the issue of Panchayat reservations will serve them as a meaningful manifesto which can easily end the adverse effects of the cattle welfare scandal. They plan to gain the maximum benefits during this Lok Sabha elections in the name of social justice. The results of the last Vidhan Sabha [state assembly] elections are a living example of astonishing success with the aid of a single slogan. The opposition is currently busy exposing the communal nature of this slogan which was employed in the name of social justice. The government had tried its level best to stop the CBI inquiry in the cattle scandal. [passage omitted]

On the basis of this publicity, large opposition parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], the Samata Party and the Congress are trying to defeat Laloo Prasad with his own platform that he launched for his own protection. Subsequent to the 19 March decision by the Patna High Court not to provide more then 50 percent reservations in the Panchayat elections and to cancel reservations of all executive posts, the opposition parties have attempted to deprive the JD of this issue. Laloo Prasad has in private passed derogatory remarks against the High Court decision and has said that he will endeavour to amend the constitution to protect reservations for extremely backward classes. [passage omitted]

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The opposition parties have also started talking about the rights of the extremely backward classes. The backdrop [to this effort] is Laloo Prasad and his so-called social justice. In this regard a recent long subjective letter addressed to Laloo Prasad from Nitish Kumar, a distinguished Samata Party leader, is getting substantial exposure. According to this letter in the 1995 Vidhan Sabha elections, some 166 JD candidates had won. This includes only 66 Yadav legislators. According to the caste census, 31 castes constitute 30 percent of the entire state population. The letter asks how there can be 66 Yadav legislators when Yadavs constitute only 10.75 percent of the population. In the JD, there are 13 Muslim legislators. This fact is enough to expose Laloo Prasad's widely propagated "Muslim-Yadav Bhai-Bhai" [Muslims and Yadavs are brothers] equation. None of the scheduled caste or backward class candidates could win a open seat on a JD ticket in the last Vidhan Sabha elections. In spite of these conditions, Laloo Prasad is not willing to set aside the concept of so-called social justice. He has started to talk about reservations for poor upper class and minorities. Both sides are waiting for the elections to check their success. Mr. Prasad, by organizing the March 18 poor people's march demonstrated that he still controls the backward classes. The crowd present at the time served as an example for both sides. For the side in power it meant that to keep their control on the vote bank they will have to do be innovative. The opposition should not think that Laloo has lost his charisma.

The organization of the march is clearly connected to Laloo Prasad's attempt to cover himself. This was an effort to attack the cattle scandal and to cool down the united opposition. The march was addressed by several distinguished leaders who depicted Laloo Prasad as an honest man and in the context of cattle scandal, an activist for successful dealings. These things indicate that within the [JD] party his position is safe both as party chief and chief minister.

The High Court's order for the CBI to proceed with the cattle scandal investigation tarnished Laloo's image before the voters. Mr. Prasad, after his unsuccessful bid to stop the CBI, started to cite this decision as his victory. According to him, he had approached the Supreme Court not to stall the CBI inquiry but to get the issue of sovereignty of states and the structure of the union considered. The court in considering its constitutional validity had given him a victory. [passage omitted]

India: Absence of Election "Wave" Asserted

96AS0015D Varanasi AJ in Hindi 29 Mar 96 p 8

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Very few [voters] seem anxious about this election, there is no noise or "wave". A few political observers, however, disagree that the lack of a wave prevails all over the country. They see waves as related to specific regions or pre-existing regional conditions. For example, a political pollster in Karnataka said that there is no wave there. According to him, all 28 constituencies have a similar situation. For the last fifteen months there has been a Janata Dal [JD] government under Chief Minister Devgowa. In 1994, during the Vidhan Sabha elections, according to this observer, there was a wave against Congress, but there is nothing like that now.

The question then is, if there is no wave in Karnataka, is there also no wave in any part of the country? What about Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Delhi or Haryana; will not one party or alliance gain a parliamentary majority? Consider the situation in West Bengal; since 1977 the leftists have been in power. Jyoti Basu is the chief minister and has acquired fame. Also, Jyoti Basu is considered to be one of the pillars of the so called "third force". In Bengal, there is no visible wave in favor of nor against any party. The lack of this wave has given sleepless nights to leftist leaders but the wave has not appeared. Even in Laloo Prasad Yadav's state of Bihar, there are no visible signs of any wave to make someone happy. Uttar Pradesh, the heartland of parliamentary elections, on the whole appears to be peaceful and is devoid of any activity. The political ocean here is perfectly calm even after the political alliance between the Samajwadi Party [SP] and the JD. There is no wave anywhere. Delhi is also passing through political tiredness and there is no wave there either. Although a little while ago a chief minister left and was replaced by another, everything is calm. [passage omitted]

When a wave flows in favor of a political party, it brings success. During the general election of 1989, Janta Dal's coming to power at the center was only possible because of the presence of a nationwide wave. Whatever was the character of this wave, during a similar tide, [in 1977] the Left Front under the leadership of the Marxist Communist Party [CPM], in West Bengal succeeded in capturing power there. Previously, the Indira Gandhi government during a general election also came to power during such a wave. Rajiv Gandhi too, in acquiring Parliamentary power, had done so in the wake of a rising wave. The political observers had called it a "wave of sympathy."

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Similarly, someone may benefit from the lack of a wave. One meaning of this may be disaffection, however, it may not be the only meaning. In any case, the lack of a wave certainly gives one certain indication; that is a dearth of voters at the polls. In itself low voter turnout is not a good indication. If the lack of a wave continues and if it translates into a poor turnout, who will benefit remains an unknown factor.

India: Alliance of Mulayam-Laloo Seen Success Story

96AS0015C Varanasi AJ in Hindi 30 Mar 96 p 8

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Subsequent to the political demise of the Congress (I) and the hawala scandal's affect on the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], it is natural for the "third force" to be active. This was visible a year ago and the speeches of leftist leaders reflected their concerns about the election but the tendency of the principals of the "third force" namely Janata Dal [JD], Samajwadi Party [SP], Telugu Desham [TDP], etc.. was to postpone the issues. At last, by the time the JD and SP parties finalized their agreement, election activities had already started. It is sure that in Uttar Pradesh where 85 delegates will be elected SP and JD both stand to reap some benefits but if political wisdom had prevailed the third group could have reaped vast gains.

In the state of Uttar Pradesh which sends the most parliamentary delegates, a total of 85, an agreement between two pillars of the three powers, the Samajwadi Party and Janata Dal has been reached. Obviously, this agreement was on Mulayam Singh's terms and they failed to rope in the Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP] and Kanshi Ram. [passage omitted]

Although neither Mulayam Singh nor Laloo Prasad have explained the terms of the agreement, it is widely believed that the 1993 accord for the Vidhan Sabha elections served as the basis for the distribution of seats. In that election the SP had won 127 seats [compared to 28 for the Janata Dal].

Janata Dal's top leadership had realized that if they had to fight on the basis of their strength, it was quite possible that they may lose the state entirely. It is therefore, noteworthy, that JD chief Laloo Prasad Yadav has demonstrated his political maturity in accepting Mulayam Singh's terms. It will be a major accomplishment even if only 6 [Janata Dal] candidates win from these 16 seats. Laloo Prasad Yadav and Sharad Yadav dramatically kept the doors open for the BSP until the last minute to please the state leadership. In fact, in the past Mulayam Singh dealt badly with all his political partners in Uttar Pradesh. His effort to increase the number of legislators in his camp by luring legislators away from JD, BSP, and Congress etc... did not ensure him a majority, on the contrary, he lost the faith of his possible colleagues. That is why the JD state leadership waited for an alliance with the BSP. Mulayam Singh's companionship may prove dangerous. On the other hand, it was not easy for the JD leadership to overlook Mulayam Singh's national image of opposing the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP]. JD's close friends like the leadership of the Communist Party of India [CPI] and the Forward Block have a soft spot for the SP. It was natural for leftists to be dismayed with the BSP when it joined hands with the BJP [in 1994] to form a government in Uttar Pradesh.

Another reason for leftists' annoyance with [BSP leaders] -Mayawati and Kansi Ram was that Kanshi Ram openly abused the communists on his trip to West Bengal. For him the communists are bigger enemies then the BJP and the Congress. Possibly the leftists in his view have a parallel standing to "manuvadis" [high caste Hindus]. It is not unnatural, therefore, for the leftists to stay away from Kansi Ram.

The BSP's isolation will certainly affect the JD-SP alliance. It is also true that if the BSP was a part of the alliance, the possible obstructions created in the future by Kansi Ram-Mayawati (which is inherent in their nature) could have affected the alliance. Perhaps Mulayam-Laloo considered the effects of the first option preferable to the second one.

India: Multinational Companies Called 'Infiltrators'

96AS0015B Varanasi AJ in Hindi 1 Apr 96 p 6

[Article by Bhrigunath Singh: "The Lok Sabha Elections and Multinational Companies."]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Today international politics is basically controlled by the economic policies of multinational companies dictated from their board rooms. The decade of eighties was a milestone in the rapid and extensive growth of these multinational companies.

The multinational companies spend more money on two non-practical divisions, industrial spying and political action groups, then they do on their research and development divisions. The industrial spying division is sprawled extensively. To seek new markets for their productions, to obtain privileged information about the production and marketing secrets of their competitors, to attract and recruit talented workers from other companies, to infuse employee strikes, and to infiltrate in labor unions are examples of their activities. It is comparatively easy to use these industrial spying activities for political spying. The political action division to safeguard financial interests of the companies also keeps an eye on certain legislators. To achieve their goals and

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to weaken the nationalist governments they have now resorted to a new approach of unnoticed collaboration with hired killers, terrorists and mafia the world over.

Two examples will suffice for its seriousness. The general secretary of the Interpol Raymond Edward Kendal, addressing the journalists in New Delhi on December 12, 1994 said that the international Mafia spends four hundred billion dollars annually to corrupt the democratic governments of the world and one billion dollars of these funds directly comes in commerce. The second example is about CIA Director Robert Gates and is based on a Washington Times story. Gates had obtained former President Bush's assurance that CIA would be free to use 40 percent of its budget on industrial spying and espionage.

There is no fine line, however, between industrial and political espionage. In the United States when the International Green Organization, in 1988, initiated their concerns about pollution from plastics, Larry Thomas, President of the American Plastics Manufacturers Association raised 150 million dollars to influence the politicians. Today the industrialists have succeeded in convincing the Congressional subcommittees that the plastic waste does not pollute the atmosphere because it is sent to the third world countries for disposal. It is interesting to note that the entire world grain market is controlled by six multinational firms. These are American Cargil and Continental Grain, French Louise Dryfus, Swiss Andreca Ranna, Brazilian Nenz and Born and Japanese Mitersur Cook.

Cargil Corporation is very active in India. Its 50 owners and 500 directors manage 600 million dollars worth of annual trade. Its 188 branches spread all over the world keep an eagles eye on weather, agriculture, currency fluctuations, market trends and political changes with the help of the latest computer technology. Over 50 legislators safeguard its interest in the U.S. Congress. International Pepsi and Coca-Cola companies greatly influence American politics. These two companies are favored by Democratic and Republican parties respectively who in turn visibly influence the presidential elections. To expose their black history in India is not our objective. The international press has already published enough about their relationship with the CIA. Their partnership in the scheme of overthrowing governments has been proven.

Over 2000 multinational companies have already arrived in India to corner the Indian consumer. Sixty of the one hundred world class companies are already established here. Their annual earnings exceed our national budget. After influencing the ruling Indian party they have their eyes set on those parties who stand to oppose the multinational firms. Their present effort to defeat the Swadeshi [support for indigenously financed products at the expense of multinational financed ones] movement is an example. For the present ruling party to regain power will be in their best interest. Unfortunately the exposure of the corruption movement launched by the political action group not only retarded the image of the Congress but also ruined its organization. Bank and share scandals, and the Enron incident have defamed the Congress to such an extent that even the multinational firms have their doubts about it.

It is natural for the national companies to incline toward the National Front-Left Front. National socialist movements in one or the other way are connected to the Socialist International which carries American and European influence. The multinational companies consider the National Front incapable of coming to power because of its weak organization and lack of internal discipline. The National Front may, however, be the best these companies can hope for after Congress is gone. The third alternate for these companies would be a situation where the Congress and National Front are successful in aligning for a majority, resulting in an unstable Parliament. The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] is the first enemy that these multinationals have, the Marxist Communist Party [CPM] is second. The multinational companies detest BJP's nationalist fiscal policy and CPM's communism. From the very beginning these two parties have opposed the multinationals. In comparison to the BJP's huge organizational structure the Marxist Communist Party's influence has been regional. Therefore, the BJP is the real challenge for these multinationals and as such they religiously try to restrain them.

In politics and war no decision is final. It is natural that any foreign interest will review the situation from all possible angles. The Congress, BJP, and the Left Front-National Front have already declared each other as untouchable. What will be the result if no single entity gets a majority? These companies will find regional parties and legislators "for sale". To influence the elections these companies can do anything, including starting a war by inciting Pakistan and internal disturbances.

The influence of money is already clearly visible on the sale of magazines, television and radio, beauty contests and payoff to journalists. Needless to say that the multinationals have infiltrated thousands of political, social, educational and student organizations in this country.

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India: Laloo Yadav, Janata Dal Seen Damaged by Scandal

96AS0016B Varanasi AJ in Hindi 3 Apr 96 p 4

[Article by Madhu Resh: "Laloo Prasad is Giving Doses of Nationalism to the Voters"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Laloo Prasad has been forced on the defensive and looks frustrated and puzzled. This situation does not bode well for him in the future, because his major strength is in being on the offensive. He had used this strategy to control his opponents. He has already started using this aggressive style in loudly demanding reserved seats in Panchayats. The Patna High Court has dismissed the reservation of seats in Panchayats established by the state government. Laloo Prasad has announced an appeal to the Supreme Court and backward caste voters against this decision. The main election issue in the state is now becoming the cattle scandal, not social justice.

The Janata Dal hopes that reservation of quotas in panchayat elections will be an effective election issue which will help to nullify the negative effect of the cattle fiasco to an extent. This Janata Dal belief is limited to its own vote bank and is for the current Lok Sabha election only. It wants to use the slogan of social justice to reap benefits for the Lok Sabha election. The results of the last Vidhan Sabha election [state assembly] is proof that this slogan has been the mainstay of their election victories. However, after elections, as the Janata Dal opponents say—and rightfully too—this well-tested and esteemed slogan is applicable only to one caste. At present, opposition parties are busy trying to prove that Laloo Prasad's use of this social justice angle was just to encourage caste-based nationalism. They are explaining to the people that had the [Bihar] government shown even the slightest interest, the court would not have turned down the reservation quota. The government on purpose did not present this issue in the court, but on the contrary went out on a limb to stop the Central Bureau of Investigation [CBI] investigation of the cattle raising case. In other words, the opposition parties are using this fact to tell two things to the people who would supposedly benefit from the social justice efforts: 1. The [Bihar] government openly protected the people who looted the money given to help them through cattle raising and did not pay any heed to the quota system that would have benefitted them. 2. The government purposely made mistakes regarding this issue in order to reap political benefit when the election is held. The government argues that the it wants to make the backwards partners in power, but the courts have now disproven this.

Major opposition parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], the Samata Party, and the Congress (I) are trying to defeat Laloo Prasad on this front which he had created for his defense. The opposition parties started to use this issue against the Janata Dal after the Patna High Court denied reservation of 50-plus percent seats in Panchayats for backwards, leaving all administrative positions open. Laloo Prasad has announced that he will have the constitution amended to get the deserved quotas for backward classes. He says that this will happen when the National Front/Left Front government is established at the Center. [passage omitted]

Mr. Laloo Yadav is being accused of compromising on standards in the context of Mr. S. R. Bommai's resignation. Mr. Bommai had to resign from Janata Dal's presidency just because his name was included in S.K. Jain's diary. Meanwhile, no action was taken against the persons involved in the cattle raising fiasco despite all the evidence against them.

We would be only repeating some facts if we mention here that the government at various levels was aware about the cattle disaster and the whole issue was swept under the rug. The CBI investigation will go as far back as 1977 and Congress Party members might also be indicted. Only time will tell how this investigation will affect the election. However, the shadow of this investigation will remain with them all the time as will the fear of being caught. If the CBI finds some conclusive evidence, this situation would be very dangerous for the Janata Dal, especially at the national level. It has its safe vote bank in Bihar because of the nationalism based on caste it feeds to the people. This is another irony!

There are no two opinions about the fact that the BJP and the Samata party will benefit most from the cattle fiasco. They have already made some agreements. The Congress (I) is left far behind in this race because of its duplicity.

India: Chandra Shekhar Said To Favor Coalition Government

96AS0015A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 5 Apr 96 p 12

[Article by Ram Bahadur Ray: "Coalition Politics is the only Path."]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Former prime minister Chandra Shekhar believes that the politics of coalition is the only answer to the challenges this country currently faces. There is a lack of leadership to bring about this coalition among the opposing political giants. Such is the condition of the times. Chandra Shekhar may have

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a decisive role to play in times of need. He accepts this role with some ifs and buts.

How does Chandra Shekhar differ in his views from the other non Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] leaders. He spoke with some journalists on these topics. The first question was regarding his agreement with the BJP on sharing seats and yet saying that he would not jointly speak from the same platform. His answer, "my political situation is clear. The agreement on seats with the BJP is on a local level, this is not solidarity. If the agreement was an election declaration, then publicity from a single platform would be warranted. This requires unity in program and policy. We were not able to achieve such unity."

Chandra Shekhar said, "the BJP is a reality. It is a political power. It is important that in the national interest its opinion on national issues should be understood." [passage omitted]

According to Shekhar, the present fragmenting of the Congress [party] is related to P.V. Narashima Rao's leadership. It had to happen. In response to a question, Chandra Shekhar clarified that his opinion is not focused on individuals, but on issues. He does not see Congress as dead. It has the power to rejuvenate. Chandra Shekhar says that if someone desires to rejuvenate the Congress, it can be done.

What will be the position of P.V. Narashima Rao after the elections? In response to this question, Chandra Shekar said, "if the Congress does not win enough seats (number of seats was not mentioned) then the party will not accept him as its leader." Asked what would be his [Shekhar's] role, Chandra Shekhar's face became tense and he did not answer. He believes that each one of the country's problems can be solved. He cultivated this belief after serving as the prime minister. [passage omitted]

Iran

Iran: Khamene'i Pardons, Commutes Sentences of 1,050 Prisoners

LD2904122696 Tehran IRNA in English 0932 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 29, IRNA — On the occasion of Eid al-Adha and the forthcoming Eid al-Ghadir (May 7), the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, Monday [29 April] granted pardon to and commuted sentences of a group of 1,050 prisoners.

The leader's decree was in response to a request made by the chief of the judiciary, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, in this respect.

The inmates had been sentenced by the general and revolutionary courts, military tribunals and the court specially dealing with the clergy.

Iran: Velayati on Israel, Lebanon, Cease-Fire

LD2704215296 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 27 Apr 96

[Interview with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by unidentified announcer in Tehran — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Announcer] Mr. Velayati, you returned from Damascus a few hours ago. As the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, you were actively involved in the recent crisis in Lebanon. My first question is this: What was the aim of the Zionist regime in attacking Lebanon?

[Velayati] [passage omitted] Israel attacked with the aim of destroying Hizballah bases in Lebanon and making residential areas uninhabitable through bombardment so that Hizballah would be militarily paralyzed and people would be unable to reside in the area. This was to create internal migration from the southern sectors towards Beirut and the northern areas. But bombardments even continued in Beirut, the al-Biqa valley and some northern areas. No area in Lebanon was safe from the barbaric Israeli aggression. They attacked from the air, from the ground — when it was within firing range — and from the sea because of Lebanon's lengthy coastline. There were some 500,000 refugees. Israel miscalculated by thinking that Hizballah would be defeated within three or four days and that domestic pressure inside Lebanon would force people to rebel against Hizballah and force the Lebanese Government to stand against Hizballah and create civil war — as we witnessed before and as it was created by Israel.

[Announcer] Mr. Velayati, as you say, the Zionist regime has failed to achieve its aims. How is it that Tel Aviv did not continue the war, despite its failure to achieve its objectives, and accepted the cease-fire?

[Velayati] The experiences of the years following the occupation of Palestine show that the Zionist regime cannot endure a long war. Moreover, Hizballah has not been indolent either, but has shown valiant resistance. It penetrated deep into the southern areas of Lebanon, towards the Palestinian borders to bring more of the occupied Palestine within its range of fire. They even had the capability to inflict a greater number of refugees on the occupying Zionist regime than those who have become refugees in occupied Palestine. According to figures we have received, about 200,000 Jews living in occupied northern Palestine had fled their homes or had taken to their underground shelters to be safe from the

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Katyusha rockets fired by Hizballah. The Zionist regime cannot endure such hardships for more than three or four days — which was the time span. During that time the foundations of the regime were shaken from within. And the Americans who seek to keep this party of the Zionist regime, that is the Labor party, in power, tried with all their might to save them. Therefore, they came to the arena first in support of the Zionist regime and, when they saw that the resistance was continuing, they changed their tactics and tried to reach a cease-fires at any cost.

[Announcer] [passage omitted] Would you tell our viewers about the results of your meeting with [Syrian] President Hafiz al-Asad?

[Velayati] It was a long meeting, more than we had predicted; about three and a half hours. At the meeting, Hafiz al-Asad offered his latest assessment of his diplomatic moves and talks with American officials. We came to a unified summing up. That is, Hizballah resistance as the principal nucleus of Islamic resistance in southern Lebanon, solidarity between Hizballah and the people and the government which has been unprecedented in Lebanese history, and the serious support by Iran and Syria for the Islamic resistance and the relatively wide-ranging support by the Islamic and Arab world to the Lebanese people and the condemnation of Israel even by those governments which have official relations with Israel. That was the combination of factors which in our assessments we reckoned to be factors affecting the victory of Hizballah. What is more, this came at a certain juncture which passed with the blessings of God and the perseverance by Hizballah as well the serious support given by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Right from the start the exalted leader [Khamene'i] gave strict orders, and the government rushed to the aid of Hizballah with all its resources in all the political and humanitarian dimensions. Thank God, we saw their victory.

Leaving this juncture behind, I should say that the long-term work with Syria and other regional states which are targets of Israeli and American greed is part of our urgent priorities in the Middle East, and a part of my talks with al-Asad was devoted to this plan for the future. God willing, the effects of such regional cooperation among the states which have close stances will gradually appear.

[Announcer] Will you allow me another question on the same subject? During the Lebanese crisis many states were busy carrying out diplomatic efforts, including, as you said, the Islamic Republic of Iran, whose role was quite prominent in those efforts, and the exalted leader had issued strict orders in that regard. How do you sum up the trend of those developments? Can those developments and Iran's efforts become a beginning for new cooperation between Iran and the regional states?

[Velayati] Some countries, specifically America, did not wish at all for Iran to have a role in that. Well, we declared in some interviews that America is not the arbiter of war and peace in this region of ours. Of course they try to intervene as an effective factor; but to decide who should be there and who should not. Our presence, Syria's presence, the Lebanese Government, more importantly, the Islamic resistance — the presence of some European countries such as France, and some of the big nations such as Russia was contrary to the wishes of the Americans. The Americans wish to be the sole arbiter in the Middle East but this recent event demonstrated that it is not so. I must say that the results of the useful and coordinated efforts which were made are an experience for cooperation among Islamic states. And I must say that to a great extent they were noticed with interest by other countries as well. We hope that they become the seeds for constructive cooperation in the future in the face of the Americans and the Zionist regime.

[Announcer] In your news conference this afternoon, on your return to Tehran, you mentioned that one of the important results of the cease-fire is furthering the bond between Hizballah and the Lebanese people, and that this cease-fire agreement is much better than the one which was concluded in July 1993 which unfortunately Israel had violated as well. It can be understood from your statements that this agreement has some points of difference with the other one. As the last question, what are those differences which you say are better?

[Velayati] The first difference is that the agreement in 1993 was an unwritten one which was achieved through the efforts made by Iran, Syria, and Hizballah, following Hizballah's tremendous resistance against the Zionist regime; while the present agreement is in written form.

Second, the right of the Islamic resistance and Hizballah to struggle in the occupied territory in the south of Lebanon was recognized by all the interested parties and relevant regional and international bodies. That means that, if you take a look at today's news, after the cease-fire a tremendous attack was carried out by Hizballah in the occupied southern Lebanese territory by which Hizballah wanted to demonstrate to friend and foe how much importance it gives to the survival and credibility of the Islamic resistance in southern Lebanon. That was why they began the attack today and inflicted heavy blows against Antoine Lahd's forces. That right has been recognized internationally and that move a few hours after the cease-fire being declared was not taken

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as a violation of the cease-fire by the world. That was the second point.

The third point is that in the earlier agreement Israel had to desist from attacking residential areas in Lebanon. Today, if Israel's allies, that is, Lahd and his assistants in occupied Lebanon, fire on and attack residential areas in Lebanon, that will be put at the door of the Zionist regime.

The next difference is the lifting of the sea blockade of Lebanese ports which was imposed by the Zionist navy about 10 months ago. Through the efforts made, the sea blockade of Lebanon, which has cost the Lebanese people dearly from the economic point of view, has ended.

[Announcer] Thank you very much.

Iran: Hizballah Communique Issued on Iran's Help in Lebanon Crisis

LD2904195396 Tehran IRNA in English 1559 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Apr 29 (IRNA) — In an official communique issued Monday (29 April), the Hizballah of Lebanon appreciated Iran's role for ending Zionists' attacks on southern Lebanon.

The Hizballah said as the result of Iran's mediation the devices of the Zionists had backfired on themselves "adding another proud page to the report card of the children of the great leader of the Muslim world, Imam Khomeyni, and of the followers of the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i."

The group also appreciated the role of the Iranian Red Crescent in Lebanon, adding that they were of the conviction that the good prayers for them of the people and government of Iran as well as the support of the Iranians was the crucial element for the triumph of the people of Lebanon in the conflict.

Iran: Spokesman on 'Substantial' Efforts To End Lebanon Crisis

LD2704102196 Tehran IRNA in English 0659 GMT 27 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, April 27, IRNA — Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi here Friday [26 April] outlined the substantial efforts that Iran has made to halt Zionist aggression in Lebanon.

In an interview with an IRNA correspondent here, Mohammadi reported that Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, heading a high-ranking political delegation, had started a regional tour aimed at achieving tranquility and peace in Lebanon.

He added that Velayati's meetings with senior Syrian officials, as well as with the foreign ministers of Russia, Italy and France were among Tehran's efforts in this regard.

During the meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) that was held in response to the Islamic Republic's request, the Zionists crimes were condemned, Mohammadi noted.

Iran considers the roles of the European Union (EU), Russia, France and Italy as important in attaining regional security, he said.

Adding that a new chapter has been opened in multilateral cooperation among the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon, and Syria with the EU and Russia, he noted this would help in establishing security and stability in the whole region.

The recent Israeli aggression proved the legitimacy of the defenseless people of Lebanon and the Hizballah Islamic resistance forces in defending their home country against aggression and occupation, the Foreign Ministry spokesman concluded.

Iran: Foreign Ministry Spokesman on Lebanon Cease-Fire

LD2604194396 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 26 Apr 96

[Interview with Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi, in Damascus, with unidentified announcer in Tehran studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer] Mr. Mohammadi, could you please tell us about the details of the cease-fire? When is it going to go into effect?

[Mohammadi] Greetings dear listeners. After serious and restless efforts by Islamic countries, particularly Syria and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and through the cooperation of several European countries, including France and Russia, the aggression and crimes of the Zionist regime are to end as of tomorrow 0400 local time [0100 GMT], 0530 Tehran time.

According to the agreement, which is based on the 1993 understanding, the Israeli regime cannot attack defenseless people and residential areas, while the right of the Islamic resistance, Hizballah to defend Lebanon and its defenseless people as well as to resist Israel in the occupied territories of south Lebanon is secured.

In comparison to the 1993 understanding and because of resistance and political efforts, there is now a supervisory committee, composed of several countries, for the purpose of supervising the implementation of the

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articles of the agreement and for studying complaints in case one of the sides violates the agreement.

Because the Zionist regime had violated the understanding many times, Iran, Syria and Lebanon placed the committee on their agenda as an important item in order to achieve a form of guarantee preventing the Zionist regime from violating the cease-fire and the agreement.

[Announcer] Mr. Mohammadi, the Israeli regime began its attacks with the aim of destroying Lebanon's Hizballah. Why did it accept the cease-fire without achieving its aim?

[Mohammadi] Israel's evil intentions met with difficulties because of the insubordination of the Lebanese people and the Islamic resistance; the spiritual support that the esteemed leader of the [Iranian] revolution had expressed in his message, and the serious and thorough efforts of Islamic and non-Islamic countries. Difficult conditions were created for Israel so it could no longer stand against international political pressure and world public opinion. The Lebanese spirit of resistance, political support, and Hizballah's struggles against the urban warfare of the Zionist regime placed Israel in a weak position. The Katyusha of the Lebanese resistance caused a security crisis in north Israel, and this crisis severely damaged the political credit and standing of the rulers of the occupied territories while they were facing domestic elections.

Furthermore, their international image, which was marred already, was further damaged because of their recent crimes at the UN base. They were forced into the agreement which, relatively speaking, has more positive elements for Hizballah than for the Zionist regime.

[Announcer] Mr. Mohammadi, the Zionist regime has so far violated all cease-fire agreements, including the 1993 agreement. Do you think the guarantees envisioned for the supervision of the cease-fire are sufficient to prevent Israel from repeating its violation of the cease-fire?

[Mohammadi] The most important guarantee is the resistance of a nation against aggression and the aggressors. Israel has been violating the agreements for the past three weeks and we have witnessed the brave resistance of the Lebanese people. All-out resistance and struggle was the reason that Israel and the United States — which had supported the Israeli war against the Lebanese people — were forced to retreat. Therefore the defeat of the first American plan was because of the resistance and the offensive position held by Hizballah and the Lebanese people. The main thing is the resistance of a nation against an aggressor which refuses to respect any international law or moral principle.

Furthermore, taking into view world pressure on Israel — even the UN Security Council met recently and condemned the Israeli regime for its crimes — if Israel were to violate the cease-fire it would, in the first instance, stand against the policies of the UN member countries and also those countries which in the past several weeks followed an active diplomacy in ending these crimes and establishing a cease-fire.

On the basis of what we have achieved through talks and political efforts, it seems that the Israeli regime has never been as weak as it is today and the Islamic resistance in Lebanon has never enjoyed so much unity and so much sympathy from the Islamic world. These are valuable factors that could prevent future aggressions.

[Announcer] Mr. Mohammadi, as the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Velayati has had intense political activities in Damascus in the past few days. Please tell us about the outcome of these activities, and in what way did they lead to the cease-fire?

[Mohammadi] Following the attack against Lebanon by the Zionist regime, the Islamic Republic of Iran started to make all-round efforts in different fields. In addition to the messages which the esteemed foreign minister sent to the foreign minister of friendly countries calling on them to condemn Israel, he asked the Organization of the Islamic Conference [OIC] and the secretary-general of the OIC, in a letter, to convene a special session. Serious activities were followed up within the Non-Aligned Movement [NAM] and also at the United Nations. The outcome of these efforts which were made during this time at the level of regional and international organizations, turned out well, as we have seen. And in the course of the past week especially, the respected foreign minister worked round the clock, focusing on the way the talks, the political efforts and negotiations were developing so as to ensure that the rights of the people of Lebanon were not violated. The consequence of the comprehensive support given to Israel by America was that solidarity and a common stance developed between the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon, Syria, European countries, and Russia. This caused America to back down from imposing its views on the people of Lebanon. As a result, these round-the-clock efforts of the past week had the effect of gaining Hizballah's willingness — the people of Lebanon's willingness — to accept the cease-fire agreement. If the agreement was not in the interest of the people of Lebanon, it would certainly not have been accepted by one of the parties.

[Announcer] Thank you, Mr. Mohammadi. I apologize for having to stop the interview here because of lack of time. Goodbye and thank you.

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Iran: Commentary Compares Israeli, Serbian Actions

LD2604204796 Tehran SALAM in Persian 21 Apr 96 p 12

[From the "Political Note" column: "Zionists and Serbs, Two Sides of the Same Coin"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The recent crime of the Israelites in the port of Tyre in Lebanon was another example of the cruelty and savagery of the Zionists against civilians and defenseless people, which was revealed to the world public opinion. The string of crimes committed by the Zionists is the continuation of the genocide of Muslims in Islamic and Middle Eastern countries for many years.

It is not too late to remember the Serbs' genocide of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, crimes which lasted for four years. Their protectors throughout the civilized Western world kept quiet about it and, of course, they also protected the war criminals. Although those crimes seemed unimaginable and unacceptable to any human being, it had certain results which were to make Muslims in Europe rely on and believe in themselves and to join the hearts and souls of Muslims throughout the world.

The recent crimes and genocide committed by the Zionists in the land of resistance, the martyr-nurturing Lebanon, should be placed in the same category and compared with the crimes of the Serbs. Similar films should be made showing the similar cases of human beings being made homeless, the weapons used and so forth and, finally, the silence of the civilized West.

As in the case of the pain and torture and oppression of the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, when Muslims and their governments and political leaders were moved voluntarily or involuntarily out of sympathy for the inhabitants of Sarajevo, there should also be the same indefatigable efforts, initiatives, remarks, and conferences in the case of Lebanon. Today Lebanon and Bosnia-Herzegovina are plays on the same stage, a stage showing the crimes of the Serbs and the Zionists.

Peres is the criminal [Radovan] Karadzic, and Clinton is Slobodan Milosovic. Today the wretched and laic Turkey is giving the Zionists the same support — regarding the use of its airspace by the fighter aircraft of the Zionist regime — that others gave the Serbs during the massacre of Muslims in Bosnia.

Today's war in Lebanon is one of innocence and resistance, one of self-sacrifice, of Hamas, of the Islamic Jihad.

Peace in the Middle East no longer means anything. Peace in the Middle East has failed and its protagonists are in constant fear of the repercussions of the current scenes in Lebanon.

Clinton, Peres, 'Arafat and King Husayn of Jordan are the wretched players who have become members of the new orchestra of genocide and massacre of Muslims in the Middle East and are cursed and abominated by the audience in the theatre of peace. A theatrical performance that can only end when the players and dancers are booed off the stage.

Iran: Daily on Combating Turkish-Israeli Accord

NC2604142096 Tehran SALAM in Persian 14 Apr 96 pp 12, 4

[Political commentary: "The Zionist Regime in the Vicinity of our Borders!"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A wave of reports and reactions by the media and public opinion in the Middle East against the presence of the Zionist regime in the strategic and vital region of the Persian Gulf — in which the coastal and maritime borders of Islamic Iran with the international waters are situated — have occupied the international news headlines.

In conjunction with those reports, the northwestern and western borders of Iran, northern Syria and Iraq were shocked by the announcement of the official presence of the Zionist regime's soldiers and airplanes in Turkish airspace in the furthermost Western areas of the region known as the Middle East, that is, in Western Asia.

The Zionists do not need the Turkish airspace for their flights. The fact is that when they have become pessimistic about their illegitimate infiltration in Syria and Lebanon, they decided to thrust their sword between these two Muslim countries in order to cross the Mediterranean via Turkey.

Meanwhile, in his interview, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Robert Pelletreau announced that contacts were being made between Algerian and Zionist regime officials as an outcome of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference.

In reviewing the official and overt onslaught of the Zionists in Islamic countries, and more importantly its geographical proximity to Islamic Iran — which has the constant and direct support of the absolutely domineering United States — it would not be inappropriate if we were to mention the contradictory reaction by our country and the region regarding the latest moves of the Zionists and their supporters.

When Shim'on Peres, the prime minister of the Zionist regime stepped on the soil of Oman and Qatar — Iran's Muslim neighbors in the Persian Gulf — our foreign

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ministry immediately displayed a timely and appropriate reaction by adopting a stance and making diplomatic moves. These moves would certainly assist in the enlightening and awakening of Muslim public opinion in the Islamic countries, especially of the region affected by the daily- proliferating danger of the Zionists.

The sensitivity of this reaction and approach assumes greater importance if we take into account the fact that Oman and Qatar are considered to be closer to us than other countries in the region in the past few years. Hence, our country's reaction clearly indicates the sense of danger of the proximity of the Zionist regime to our shores and to the Persian Gulf among the relevant officials in our country. [passage omitted]

On the other hand, the announcement of a security pact that is in fact a strategic alliance with Zionism and "Pan-Turkism" [preceding word in Persian transliteration of English] as two racist concepts between the common secular regime and the Zionist regime against the sensitive security interests of the Middle Eastern countries, in particular, of Iran, Syria, and Iraq clearly indicates a serious danger to our Western borders.

In view of the contradictory rebuttals of the Turks that were delivered in a defensive and groveling manner, our foreign minister contented himself with a mere expression of regret. It is not known how these purely diplomatic remarks that lacked necessary forcefulness will be able to safeguard the national security and interests as well as the gains of the Islamic Revolution.

The Zionist airplanes use of Turkish airspace is an overt and official aggression of the Islamic Republic of Iran's western and northwestern boundaries and the Zionist regime continues to harp on attacking sensitive Iranian installations such as the Bushehr and Neka' powerplants.

The Turks, like the militarists ruling Algeria, need extensive assistance from the United States and the Zionist regime in current circumstances. Hence, they have resorted to contradictory allegations as a result of the wave of reports and expressions of hatred by the public in the press and in the media and the utterances of the personalities of Islamic countries and governments.

This is a display in which those responsible will soon reap the consequences of their audacity from their people and the region in the not so distant future. Turkey, with its debts of $80 billion loaned by Western institutions and governments, an 80 percent rate of inflation and capital flight, its exorbitant, fruitless, and expensive competition in the Central Asian countries, unrest due to the Kurds, corruption in the Armed forces, especially among the police, will be transformed into another Algeria or Bahrain due to its misjudgment that cannot be prevented by all the NATO bases.

However, all the Islamic countries, especially those with borders with the occupied territories, that is Syria and Egypt, adopted categorical and clear positions and displayed their reactions on the unquestioned danger of their security from the Zionist regime due to the military and security accord with the Turks. In fact, today, in order to gain control of the land and water of Arab countries, Turkey has pinned its hopes on the Zionist regime and its American supporters!

The seepage of radioactive material from the concealed reactors in the Dimona desert and the pressure by the Zionists against the people and the resistance of the Palestinian combatants in the occupied territories as well as the Americans' desire for putting everything on the Zionists' plate were other reasons for the Arab countries' reactions. [passage omitted]

At a glance, the contradictions in the political and strategic conduct of countries that are affected by the presence of the Zionist regime in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf can be clearly perceived. In other words, they are oblivious to the depth of the catastrophe and danger of the criminal Zionists and aggressors against the Islamic countries in the region; that is, there is a lack of a unified strategy. Their minds are vacant with regard to strategic planning for the political security of all these countries from the danger that is growing near their ears like a cancerous tumor.

Now the time for consolidating all their resources against the Zionists has come. The tripartite committee of Iran, Syria, and Turkey no longer has any meaning and should give way to a committee of Iran, Syria, and Iraq in the region against the Zionists. Public opinion, national and public security interests, and common ideological values need to be in unison, God willing...

Iran: 'Alarming' Increase in U.S-Israeli Military Links Seen

LD2904151096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 29 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Zionist Prime Minister Shim'on Peres entered the United States on 27 April, following 17 days of savage invasion against Lebanon's civilian areas and innocent people by that unscrupulous regime. In his visit of the United States, the Zionist boss signed a number of agreements with the United States, including security ones.

The first agreement he signed has called for the United States to give more aid to the illegitimate Zionist

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regime in its war against what they call terrorism. The second agreement also calls for more aid to the Zionist regime to protect it against ground-to-ground missiles and Katyusha rockets, which the Lebanese Hizballah fires into northern occupied Palestine in response to barbarous Zionist attacks on the residential areas of Lebanon.

The anti-rocket weapon system, which is supposed to be given to the Zionists, is scheduled to reach its experimental stages by the end of 1997. Also, a number of Pentagon experts are to go to occupied Palestine next week to find ways of improving the Zionists' defense systems in countering rocket attacks by the Hizballah.

The Zionist regime has asked for $200 million to expand its anti-rocket defense system. Although the Zionist regime has always been benefiting from the multi-billion dollar U.S. military and economic aid, efforts to give more aid to the Zionist regime at the moment, when savage attacks against Lebanon have exposed that regime to severe criticism by world public opinion, are tactical means by the United States to deviate American public opinion from the reality of the Middle East, especially Lebanon, and to justify its outright support of the criminal Zionist regime under the pretext of fighting terrorism. This is all in the face of condemnation by most political and legal international bodies of the Israeli mass murder in Lebanon, designating it as the boldest human rights violator and the most notorious practitioner of state terrorism in the world.

According to political observers, another reason for Peres's trip to the United States at this juncture is his complete defeat in obtaining his goals in his genocidal invasion of Lebanon and the Zionist military's incompetence in weakening Lebanon's Hizballah, let alone destroying it. The disability of the Zionist regime's military to counter the Islamic resistance forces' operations on the field in south Lebanon and, consequently, the launching of most beastly attacks by that regime on the Lebanese residential areas and defenseless people has brought into the open, more than ever before, the impotence of the Zionists' so-called invincible forces.

What is certain is the (?bare) fact that the recent invasion of the Zionist regime against Lebanon and its negative consequences have seriously worried the rulers of the usurper regime of Quds [Jerusalem] and its blind supporter, the United States of America. This is another issue because of which the United States is trying to boost the broken morale of the defeated Zionists through the raising of military aid to that child-killing regime.

On the whole, the Middle East analysts evaluate the expansion of military and security cooperation between Tel Aviv and Washington to be alarming for Islamic countries and in line with the long-time U.S. policy to see the anti-human Zionist regime as the superior military power in the region.

Iran: Peres Trip Reflects 'Tactical Upheaval' in U.S. Policy

LD3004121296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0957 GMT 30 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The lengthy visit of Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres to the United States is now in its third day. In view of the volume of the military, political, and strategic agreements, the trip can be seen as an indication of a tactical upheaval in the regional policies of the United States.

When the compromise process hit a territorial barrier, so to speak, as a result of the Arab sides' insistence on getting back their occupied territory, which led to the defeat of Shim'on Peres' economic tactics, the regional policies of Israel and the United States experienced a tactical upheaval.

Starting a few months ago, the important and militaristic elements in the Zionist regime's cabinet began changing their peace- seeking words and turned once again to underlining Israel's traditional military approach. As a result its government started carrying out blatant acts of intervention in particular regional events, such as the Eritrean crisis, in order to gain a presence in strategic regions of the Middle East and, at the same time, it started signing extensive military agreements with such eager parties as the Turkish Government.

In line with these developments, the United States also initiated new steps and, while consolidating the regional approach of dual containment and increasing the range of its forces' influence in the Persian Gulf, it signed new agreements with the governments of such places as Jordan in order to deploy new units of its forces. The coordination of this militaristic approach could be seen clearly at the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, where the United States and Israel were the only participants that were emphasizing the lever of the extensive violent and military suppression of their opponents. The manifestation of this was seen in the horrific human tragedy created by the Zionist regime in Lebanon.

This trip is one of the clear indications of the above-mentioned tactical upheaval; an upheaval which, it would seem, will have a direct and decisive effect on the future process of compromise. During this phase, the United States has openly set aside its shaky and biased

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role as a mediator in the process of compromise and has come out clearly in support of Israel, so that the Arabs found no other way to end the Lebanese crisis but to turn to the United States' European rivals.

It would, therefore, seem that, in order to implement its Middle East policy, the United States will once again show greater attention to the traditional methods of strengthening its political and military influence and, in view of this tactical approach, the Zionist regime is preparing itself for a major confrontation in the course of the process of compromise.

Iran: Paper on U.S., European Attitudes Toward Iran

LD2704200196 Tehran IRAN in Persian 24 Apr 96 p 2

[Commentary by Hamideh Fahimi from the "Several Aspects of the Story" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] The story: At their meeting in Luxembourg on Monday [22 April], the foreign ministers of the European Union called on the United States to refrain from approving any harsher laws regarding sanctions on Iran, because otherwise, relations between Europe and the United States would be harmed.

First point: Although the United States and the Zionist regime have carried out extensive efforts in recent months to persuade Europe to break off ties and talks with Iran, and although they have made unfounded allegations against Islamic Iran in order to justify their request, at the end of the meeting in Luxembourg, the German foreign minister stressed that none of the foreign ministers of the 15 member countries of the European Union wished to break off talks with Iran.

The Italian foreign minister, too, had also announced about two weeks earlier that Europe did not accept Washington's policies against Iran, Cuba, and Libya, and that it reserved the right to take any legal measures it deemed appropriate against any American actions that threatened European interests.

Second point: Around the middle of Farvardin [Iranian month beginning 20 March 1996] during a visit to Tehran, European Union representatives were informed about the Islamic Republic of Iran's clear and decisive views about ties with Europe, as well as about developments in the Middle East.

Despite the pressure from Washington, in their meetings with Iranian officials, the European envoys visiting Tehran described the Islamic Republic of Iran as an important, key country in the Persian Gulf. They also stressed that the role played by Iran in regional equations cannot be overlooked. This stance clearly contradicted the official position of the United States, which stresses the need to isolate Islamic Iran, and demonstrated that Washington's abrasive and vengeful policies do not have supporters even in Europe.

Third point: Apart from their opposition to the United States' anti-Iranian policies, European countries also refused to accept Washington's stance towards Cuba and towards developments in Lebanon. The foreign trade spokesman of the European Union accused the United States of trying to impose its laws on other countries. He called on the United States not to violate international regulations in its approach to Cuba. On Lebanon, too, contrary to the United States, which openly supports the Zionist regime's acts of aggression, the European Union has condemned Israel's military operations. Although it should be said that the European Union has also expressed its opposition to the operations by Hizballah, nevertheless, its stance was against Israel in the sense that it was not prepared to refrain from condemning the aggressors just to please the United States. This kind of approach by Europe towards the United States carries the clear message to the leaders of the White House that their "allies" have let them down.

Last point: Islamic Iran considers the expansion of ties with Europe, with full respect for the interests of both sides, to be one of its foreign policy programs and it believes that Europe must regulate its relations with Tehran through the adoption of independent policies and free from foreign pressures. Good relations between Iran and Europe are, undoubtedly, to the advantage of both sides. This is why the continuation of talks on the basis of mutual respect and concern for the interests of both sides will be a positive step towards removing misunderstandings, gaining the greatest possible knowledge about the other side's stances and, also, thwarting the efforts of the opponents of "the consolidation of ties between Europe and Iran" to harm these relations.

Iran: Editorial Condemns U.S., EU Actions in Middle East

LD2904170496 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 27 Apr 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Once More United States Inflicts a Blow on International Law"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] After 16 days of violations of all known human rights and international laws, it was announced yesterday that a written understanding has been reached by Israel and the Lebanese Hizballah.

Such an agreement is against the aspirations of the peace-loving people in the region. It could have satisfied

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all if Israel had withdrawn its forces from the occupied territory in south Lebanon for the sake of durable peace in that part of the world.

In other developments, on Thursday's [25 April] UN General Assembly voting on Israeli atrocities against the Lebanese proved one more time that the U.S.-led countries have not yet understood the realities in the Middle East.

As long as the West fails to comprehend the realities related to the Islamic world, the gap in the mutual understanding will continue to grow wider and wider.

The Lebanese case is very simple and clear. The Zionists usurped their land and they want to resume control of it. In fact, a clear mandate of the Security Council in the form of Resolution No. 425 is still to be implemented by the usurper.

It was not surprising that the United States and Israel were the only two countries that opposed the non-biding resolution which condemned Israel's air, land and sea bombardments of the Lebanese during the last two weeks.

The surprising aspect was the decisions of Japan, Canada and the European Union members that refrained to vote. Abstention means that these countries did not favour the resolution.

Should we believe that the European Union succumbed to pressure exerted by the United States? That would be a surprising development, because as we noted before, the moves of the certain European countries particularly France in the Middle East during the last few days exhibited hopeful signs.

Russia and certain European countries, contrary to the United States, were involved in shuttle diplomacies in the region for a durable peace in that part of the world.

The French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette met with the Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati and according to reports, they share identical views. Iran, France and Russia want Israel to vacate the Lebanese land. So much so that De Charette declared his country's readiness to send peace-keeping forces to be posted on both sides of the Israeli-Lebanese borders.

But the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher insisted the 1993 accord should be revived, this time in written form.

In the light of these facts, the stance adopted by the EU countries on Thursday [25 April] was surprising, and disappointed those who supposed Europe and Japan were taking a serious and just stance on the Lebanese issue.

This is a crucial point in the history of the struggles of the people who have been fighting for their genuine rights, and all the Islamic countries shoulder historical responsibilities.

The leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i rightly referred to the weakness of Muslim states and disunity among them.

If the Muslims are united, Israel or the United States could never even think of inflicting a blow on any of the Islamic countries.

Ayatollah Khamene'i was also right when he drew to the attention of the Islamic world that the 'Arab world' by its own deeds placed itself in such a condition that, regrettably, it is unable to defend the Lebanese people who are victims of the crimes of the usurper Zionist regime.

Unity and awareness on the part of the Islamic countries of the Zionist plots, coupled with the readiness of those countries to combat these plots are the only means of conducting an honourable course. Otherwise, the United States will continue to inflict on us one blow after another.

Iran: Daily Calls CNN 'Appendage' of White House Foreign Policy

NC3004101196 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 21 Apr 96 p 2

[Yunesh Shokrkhah commentary: "CNN-Israeli Collusion for Masking the Lebanon Debacle"]

[FBIS Translated Text] While Israel has unleashed a bloodbath in Lebanon with its bestial attacks, and the massacre of Lebanese Muslims by the occupied Jerusalem forces is clearly evident, the Western news agencies, in particular the American news networks, are airing the most minimal coverage of these crimes.

Yesterday, the CNN television network disseminated an hour-long program on the Nazi crimes against the Jews during World War II! It included interviews with elderly American Jews both male and female of that era, so that the Zionists' recent atrocities in Lebanon could be overshadowed and public sensitivities could be aroused in favor of the Jews! In that program, footage of films from that era and of the forced labor camps and prisons set up by the Nazis were shown, with somber music in the background and a melancholy commentary, while all the elderly American Jews without exception were shown sobbing and affected by their experiences as they recounted them...

By disseminating this so-called tragic program, CNN sought to mask Zionist terrorism — which is today at its

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most blatant in Lebanon — by reviving, at this particular juncture, the past horrors of CNN's picture of Nazism, so that the impact of Zionist terrorism is lost under the shadow of Nazism. Whether or not the casualty figures attributed to Nazi massacres are accurate, the Zionists and the Nazis irrefutably have one thing in common: their racist thinking. In addition, CNN's dissemination of this program indicates that this was a defensive action on the part of CNN in order to ensure [the sympathies of] even American public opinion — which is accustomed to a life of news censorship — for the horrible scenes of Israeli crimes.

In any case, these media ploys were unable to efface the horrifying visage of the Zionists from the public mind, and just exposed CNN's true face further.

CNN chief Ted Turner has constantly sought to project his media empire as independent, but one point clearly exposes the fact that CNN's Turner is an alternative [preceding word in English transliterated into Persian] to the United Nations for the United States, and an appendage of the White House's foreign policy: CIA chief John Deutsch said that the CIA reserves the right to use journalists for espionage purposes — of which the airing of such a film by CNN is a clear example. While expressing its support for the savage Israeli attacks on Lebanon, the United States also blocked the approval of a UN resolution against Israel. Now, the presenting of such a film by CNN is an extension of these two U.S. actions and provides theoretical grist to the process of masking the U.S. role in this bloodshed being carried out by the Zionists in Lebanon.

Of course, this is not the first time CNN acts as a catalyst for the actions and reactions of U.S. foreign policy. Earlier as well, it had stooped to becoming a tool for the Pentagon's espionage by carrying direct transmissions of the bombing of Baghdad and of the U.S. aggression against Panama, Somalia, and Haiti.

Iran: Article Claims 'Arafat Lost 'Revolutionary Ideals'

LD2904194596 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 25 Apr p 2

[Article by Yasmin P. from the "Viewpoint" column: "End of Ideology"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Age obviously has mellowed Yasir 'Arafat and failed his memory, too. We are about to witness the final termination of the PLO as a revolutionary entity — a finale to the Palestine National Council (PNC) charter written when it was formed in 1964, calling for the destruction of Israel through armed struggle. This credo and the cherished slogan that "commando action constitutes the nucleus of the Palestinian popular liberation war" are likely to be assigned to the pages of history books by the PLO parliament in the coming days.

'Arafat in his opening address to the PNC on 23 April said that with the "end of the war and violence, articles in our charter which oppose the peace process must be cancelled." And, "all articles against the 'Peace of the Brave,' with Israel must be changed," he stressed.

Of course, 'Arafat's audience were mostly his middle-aged loyalists who, like him, have forgotten their revolutionary ideals and philosophy.

The PLO leader's call for "peace" with Israel comes in sharp contrast to the recent aggression unleashed by the Zionists on Palestinian and Hezbollah targets in Lebanon and the fact that Israeli soldiers are in Hebron, weeks after they were supposed to quit. Moreover, the Zionists have still maintained the closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, throttling the Palestinian economy. Israel has not yet recognized the Palestinian right to statehood. Nor will it ever, and as long as it exists it will continue to go after the "Promised Land," constantly targeting the Palestinian cause in particular with the aim of wiping it out.

Under the latest Israeli-Palestinian agreement, the PLO parliament must amend the charter by 7 May, naturally to Israel's advantage and on its terms and conditions.

'Arafat's call to the PNC is another move towards granting legitimacy and authority to the Zionists on Arab soil. Since the "peace process" began nearly three years ago, all 'Arafat's actions have been in contradiction to the PLO charter and its ideology.

The PLO is still under an illusion that it can get its rights by being subservient to Israel and, therefore, 'Arafat is bowing lower to Zionist dictates, in fact, going overboard to please.

But the struggle against Zionism will not be given up so easily. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have sacrificed their lives in their legitimate fight against the usurpers and will continue to do so. The diverse Islamic resistance movements which are carrying on with the revolutionary struggle in the occupied territories, long before 'Arafat even returned to Palestine, continue to do so today and are the torch-bearers for the future of the Palestinian struggle.

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Iran: Editorial Urges Implementing UN Resolutions in Middle East

LD2904163896 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 27 Apr 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Surest Path to Peace in Middle East — Implement UN resolutions"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Though the Zionist regime has agreed to stop the carnage of innocent Lebanese people, the world will never forget [a] few points about the United States, the UN and the EU.

The attacks of the Zionist regime during the past two weeks have left about 160 people killed, 350 wounded (almost all civilians) and 300,000 homeless.

Throughout the carnage, the United States was a major source of moral and material support for the Zionist regime. Not only Washington did not condemn the carnage of innocent Lebanese people, but it tried to boost Israel's morale. Amid the genocide, the U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry, defying international conventions, warned that the United States was ready to use nuclear weapon[s] to boost Israel's security.

In order to give a green signal to the Israeli state terrorism to go ahead with the massacre, Perry tried to divert [the] world's public opinion from the genocide of Muslims in Lebanon to an imaginary future threat. It is a fact that Israel has more than 200 nuclear warheads. But Perry did not even mention that.

No doubt it was the United States that threatened to block any move by [the] Security Council to condemn Israel, but other members are equally to blame. The same members approved use of force for forcing Iraq out of Kuwait in 1990. What had happened to them this time?

The 16-day-long carnage of Muslims in Lebanon will remain as a stigma on the forehead of the UN Security Council throughout its future history, for, it practically sold itself to the U.S. bullying.

The Lebanon tragedy proved that the United Nations is not capable of responding to the requirements of the emerging world order. It is time to revamp the body to make it more representative and transparent.

Although some of the EU members, specially France, spared no effort to broker peace in the Middle East, all 15 members of the European Union were among the abstainers when the General Assembly passed a resolution on Thursday [25 April] condemning Israel's attacks against civilians in Lebanon.

The Third World is fully aware that the United States is an embodiment of double-standard approaches to the issues of human rights and terrorism. If the EU wants to be trusted by the Third World in the emerging world order, it should shun double-standard approaches to terrorism and human rights.

Although a cease-fire has been reached, it cannot be a durable path to peace as the 1993 accord could not ensure a permanent truce. The surest path to peace in the Middle East is Israeli total withdrawal from the occupied territories and full implementation of the UN resolutions.

Iran: Foreign Minister Interviewed on Relations With Belarus

WS3004125396 Minsk BTK Television Network in Belarusian 1700 GMT 28 Apr 96

[Video report on interview with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by Anatol Awcharenka in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Velayati received us at his residence, where he usually meets with foreign guests. At the beginning of our conversation, the Iranian foreign minister recalled that Belarusian-Iranian relations became much more active over the past year. Last March, Teheran hosted a Belarusian delegation headed by the prime minister. Later, the Iranian first deputy prime minister was the Belarusian capital's guest. This March, I planned to visit your country, 'Ali Akbar Velayati said during an interview with our program. Although the visit was postponed, this will not affect our relations. I am convinced that I will certainly familiarize myself with Belarus and its hard-working people.

My country, Mr. Velayati continued, used to have good relations with the Soviet Union. However, today I am very pleased to say that after the appearance of new independent states on the territory of the former USSR, Belarus has become the first country with which the Islamic Republic of Iran is very actively establishing bilateral relations. It is understandable that an exchange of various delegations does not merely means visits and courtesies. We have signed a number of agreements, and in the course of every meeting we discuss the problems and difficulties which occur in relations between our states. We jointly search for methods to strengthen Belarusian-Iranian relations.

I think, the minister added, that we must exert efforts to make these agreements work for the benefit of our peoples. We extended an invitation to Mr. Foreign Minister Syanko to visit Teheran on an official visit. As far as I know, it was received with pleasure. The preparations for this visit are yet another opportunity to learn more about each other's potentials. So far,

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Belarus and Iran have no direct banking relations and air connections. I am convinced that they should be established in the immediate future, because the Iranian side is convinced that the Republic of Belarus is a very promising partner, particularly now that we are going to open the largest railroad line in our region. It will crisscross the entire country from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf. This will be a particular bridge between the West and the East. Belarus, which has no direct access to the sea or the Middle East, will receive such a possibility. For example, through the new railroad line it will be possible to deliver Iranian oil to your country or ship goods from our region to West Europe via Belarus. Can you imagine what prospects are opening for Belarusian-Iranian relations? Therefore, it was no accident that my country's ambassador handed over to esteemed Alyaksandr Lukashenka an invitation to be a honorary guest during the ceremony opening the largest railroad line in the region.

Following the interview, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran suggested taking a photograph to record this meeting, and we used this opportunity.

Iran: Pro-Rafsanjani Weekly To Possibly Close

LD2904194196 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 27 Apr 96 p 2

[Article: "Note From BAHMAN"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The interest and sensitivity shown in BAHMAN has been greater than expected.

Some readers, colleagues, and writers have approved of BAHMAN's strategy and content and this has made BAHMAN responsible not to resign itself to decline. Should BAHMAN fail to maintain and improve its quality it would prefer to close down.

We thank our honorable readers, and should publication come to an end, the remainder of their subscriptions will be returned to them.

Iran: Editorial Says Debate on Press Freedom Boundaries 'Vital'

LD2904205296 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 24 Apr 96 p 6

[Unattributed editorial: "Editor's Note"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The relationship between the culture and the press in a society cannot and must not be any other than a two-way street. In fact, the ideological and traditional criteria dominate a society, form the structure and the contents of its press, and the press is enhancing the very same culture. If it should be otherwise, then it will represent the spreading of a kind of disease.

Our Islamic society, whose ideological and traditional criteria have acquired a full clarity — at least after the victory of the Islamic revolution — is now feeling a need for a fundamental debates about the press. This need has been felt more in the past few years when the number of press publications has notably increased and there are many diversities in their perception and actions.

The writer of this article believes that a debate is vital today about a foundation that can establish the boundaries of press freedom. It may be said that the Constitution and the Press Law have clearly determined and explained such foundations; however, this is far from what we witness in deed.

We have seen in recent years that those publications that obtained their permit on the conditions of adnering to the constitution and beliefs of the Muslim people and the Press Law have published whatever they wanted. They have attacked the nation's sanctities and ideals with the worst possible vilifications and insults. They have used abusive language against their critics and at the same time shouted "freedom of the press," complained about lack of it, and invited others to observe the law, etc. But when on the bases of the same Press Law their crime was investigated and an appropriate verdict was issued, they screamed to heaven and began giving interviews to the foreign newspapers, etc.

Ultimately, one day it should be made clear which criteria are determining the limits of freedom of speech and pen in our country: The Human Rights Charter? The world current journalism? The stances taken by the Western press, etc? Or Islam and belief of the Muslim nations who have created a revolution. In such cases, from whose views should its obvious criteria be derived: The architect of the Islamic revolution? The leader of revolution? Or etc. This is an unavoidable need and the more we delay it the more difficult and impossible it will become to compensate for the damage.

What better opportunity than the days of holding the third press festival and who is better than the devoted and sympathetic journalists?

Iran: Editorial Examines Right to Freedom of Speech

LD2904194796 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 27 Apr 96 p 7

[Editorial: "Not Only Us, But Others Should Be Allowed To Speak"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The appearance and the expansion of publications which advocate specific views on

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matters of religion and politics have promoted a particular question for their journalists and outside observers: Is it permissible for publications, which have stated intellectual and political views, to publish works by authors who are not necessarily advocates of these perspectives? In other words, who should be among the writers of a publication which advocates specific views? Should writers be chosen for their ideological, factional, and behavioural similarity even before their article is read, analyzed, and published? Or should every article be analyzed and judged independently from its author?

We have tried to show in practice the belief that publications should extend the circle of their writers from the limits of monopoly and to print articles from anyone who respects the general strategic framework of the publication. We have even tried to print the work of those people who are not particularly acceptable to us. Now, the reader might ask what is the rationale behind the act of publishing the views of other people? We shall try to discuss some of the reasons:

Our first reason is epistemological. We know that all social phenomena have many and various aspects and that each person, because of his intellectual background and personal interests, comprehends and emphasizes one aspect. The only possible way to study the various dimensions of a phenomenon is to make it possible for people of different views and interests to discuss it from different perspectives. In such circumstances there would be the greater possibility of achieving a comprehensive analysis and approaching the truth. Obviously, it would be best if a single person was able to do this, but selective approach to social phenomena is generally an unconscious act [of the individual].

Our second reason is legal. We have accepted to defend the legal right of all citizens, independent of their [political] tendency and to execute the law in this regard. The freedom of speech and expression of views (within the framework of law) are among the basic rights of citizens. If we don't want this law to remain on paper we have to prepare the basis for its implementation. One of the best ways to do this is to establish an environment where experts can express their views — and do this particularly in a framework where no one would be able to label, condemn, or force them off the stage before hearing their views.

Our next reason is psychological. If someone is confident of his message and his ability in communicating his message, he will not be anxious to place his message next to other ones. In fact, such a condition would delight the holders of powerful messages, who are also talented communicators, because the comparison would show the splendour of their own message. Thus, the clash of ideas becomes a method for propagation of powerful ideas.

Our country is facing problems which have no simple-minded solutions; as global and national experience has proved, fast and one-sided solutions are not possible. In today's turbulent world, the complicated path of reform passes through dialogue, discussion, critique,and analysis.

Every solution to a problem is initially a suggested assumption that is then presented to logic and analysis. In this way and through participation in thinking the correct path is found. Furthermore, have we not been the communicators of the wisdom that "we should evaluate the speech, not the speaker."

Iran: Article Calls For Provision of Housing for Needy

LD2604125596 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 21 Apr 96 p 4

[Article by Dr. Mohammad Baqer Sadri: "Economic discussion no. 129: Beyond Queues"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Following the emphasis placed by the honorable leader [Khamene'i] on housing and its provision for the deprived, his excellency the president [Hashemi-Rafsanjani] discussed the matter with the Housing Foundation.

The reality is that, despite all the slogans being chanted about the provision of houses for the low-income and the deprived groups of society, still 20 percent of the country's population — that is more than 14 million people — do not own a house. [passage omitted]

In recent years, the spread of multistorey apartment blocks or the mass production of houses on the one hand, and the over-the-top prices demanded for each square meter of a house have raised a number of questions in the minds of the general public, particularly the low-income groups.

The increase in housing prices compared with the increase in inflation on the one hand, and the increase in the price of other goods on the other hand, are unbelievable and have created problems. In Tehran, which has become a model for other cities, house prices are increasing second by second. [passage omitted]

A five-year plan in which the target areas are defined could pave the way for the gradual provision of houses for the deprived within a specific time limit and help the gradual elimination of property speculators and the apartment-block mentality from the economic arena of society.

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There is no doubt that every individual can participate in a healthy economy for a reasonable profit. The Housing Foundation should prepare this healthy economy together with the people. This is a feasible task; it needs determination, management, leadership, and support — all of which we fortunately possess.

We should prepare ourselves for such a task today; tomorrow is too late.

Iran: Tehran Municipality Cancels Agreement With TV Station

LD2604163996 Tehran SOBH in Persian 23 Apr 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] The cooperation agreement between the Tehran Municipality and the Fifth TV Channel has been cancelled because of a satirical puppet show which was broadcast depicting a number of ministers, which annoyed the mayor of Tehran.

KEYHAN-E HAVA'I reported that for the first time, during the New Year holidays, a satirical puppet show was broadcast in which a number of cabinet ministers were depicted as puppets and were criticized. At a cabinet session Tehran Mayor Gholam Hoseyn-Karbaschi severely criticized Dr. 'Ali Larijani, executive director of the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for broadcasting the program.

Latest reports indicate that the mayor's annoyance resulted in the cooperation agreement between the municipality and the Vision of the Islamic Republic being cancelled.

Since the inauguration of the Fifth TV Channel, the Tehran channel which essentially carries programmes about issues in the city of Tehran, a large part of the channel's programming budget has been provided by the municipality. However, with the agreement cancelled, the municipality has stopped paying its share of the budget.

Meanwhile, the fifth channel has changed its programs in a way that the indirect publicity programs for Tehran Municipality have been replaced with programs criticizing the work of the municipality and illustrating the shortages and problems in Tehran.

Iran: Gachsaran Viewers Appeal for Access to Channel 3 TV

LD2904195096 Tehran SALAM in Persian 25 Apr 96 p 5

[Reader's letter by 'Ali Akbar Heydari: "The wishes of families in Gachsaran"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At a time when Channel 4 and Channel 5 of Iran's television are going to be launched and Channel 3 has already been launched in many of our country's regions and people can watch the channel's programs, we, the people of Gachsaran are deprived of watching those programs.

Many youths, sportsmen, and sports fans have to travel to a neighboring city to watch an important soccer match. We are also deprived of leisure and entertainment facilities such as cinemas, parks, libraries, clubs, and sports stadiums to meet the needs and requirements of the people, especially the youths during their spare time.

Unfortunately, during the seasonal rains in autumn and winter, the storm and thunder are causing technical damage to the booster transmitters of Channels 1 and 2. And sometimes, days and weeks go by and we are unable to hear the main Iranian and world news on Channel 1 or 2. [passage omitted]

Therefore, by switching to another channel we are witnessing, on our television screens, scenes of dancing and singing and indecent shows and films broadcast from the countries in the Persian Gulf region and other foreign countries that own very strong transmitters and have women presenters wearing improper Islamic dress.

It should be noted that we have mentioned the problem, through the mass media in the form of written and verbal comments, to the city officials from the department of Culture and Islamic Guidance to the governorship, district head, municipality, and the office of Gachsaran's Majles deputy. We have asked them to do something about this urgent issue, but a positive result to the satisfaction of the people of Gachsaran has not been achieved. The letters, measures, and telephone calls by Gachsaran's officials, to whom our complaints are addressed and who have never let us down and have always followed up the issue, did not bear any fruit.

In view of the above facts, on behalf of the people of Gachsaran, I request from the kind and honest officials of the system of the Islamic Republic, from the esteemed Majles deputies, and from the Voice and Vision in the center of Yasuj Province, who do not have any other aim but to serve the people, to pay more attention to the lawful and just demands of the people of Gachsaran,

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and in particular of its youths. This will help to prevent social corruption and the negative effects and the unknown consequences of the cultural onslaught by the corrupt global arrogance which, with huge investments, does not spare any efforts to defame Islam, beguile youths, and portray the values of the Islamic revolution as less valuable. We hope they [officials] will decide to launch Channel 3 television in Gachsaran as soon as possible.

[Signed] 'Ali Akbar Heydari.

Iran: Paper Questions Growth in Non-Oil Exports

LD2704222196 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 23 Apr 96 p 4

[Commentary by Dr. Habib Chini: "A Year of Export Promotion...Really?"; from the "Economic Note" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] This year, too, has been declared a year for the promotion of non-oil exports. For a few years now, the promotion of non-oil exports has been declared to be the main aim of the country's foreign trade. However, in the course of the year, measures are taken which, from the start, call into question the export promotion program, with the ultimate result being nothing other than a fall in non-oil exports. For example, according to the aims approved in the second [five-year] plan, we should have had 5.4 billion dollars of exports. However, the events that began on 21 May 1995 regarding the policy of stabilizing the exchange rate — since they were implemented in an incomplete fashion — had a negative impact on non-oil exports, such that one can hardly even say that the country's total non-oil exports amounted to 3 billion dollars last year. Thus, we fell 2.4 billion dollars short of our aim.

As we explained on another occasion in this column, the head of the Plan and Budget Organization claims that, if the policy of stabilizing the exchange rate had not been imposed, the inflation rate would have reached three figures by last Shahrivar [Iranian month beginning 23 August]. Very well, let us assume that this is entirely correct. Nevertheless, we did not achieve the aim of promoting exports and we have even gone backwards considerably from where we started. In fact, the program to promote exports was converted into a program claiming to control inflation.

However, the problem is that, while we did not achieve the aim of promoting exports — the main aim — we also reached the highest annual level of inflation seen in the country in recent years. In other words, even based on the lowest level announced by the governor of the Central Bank, that is, 48 percent, this would still be the highest level of annual inflation seen in our country for the past 40 years. On top of this, we say that, if we had not carried out the policy of stabilizing the exchange rate, we would have had three figure inflation.

But the fact is that the absence of three-figure inflation was not the result of the adopted policy's role in reducing exports and increasing supply, because everything that used to be exported officially was exported illegally. It is a source of regret that we still have not learned what is wrong with our economy. A healthy economy, benefiting from religious ideology, Islamic ethics, so many resources, a suitable climate, excellent geographical location, and hard-working and intelligent people, should not be faced, at one and the same time, with unemployment, inflation and a single-export economy. There can be no other reason for these problems than the lack of correct planning and the failure to allow any program to yield results.

Perhaps more elderly people may remember that, in the years following oil nationalization, Iran was forced to shut down its oil wells. An oil-free economy gained real meaning in those days and it was at that time, too, that Iran's foreign trade showed a surplus. Inflation did not reach such high figures either. What we need to do is to take the time to study the matter and decide where our weakness lies - if not in our management? [passage omitted]

If, this year, we really wish to make our exports benefit from more variety and to make it reach a level, in terms of value and volume, worthy of our country, we must, before anything else, improve the management of our export sector. Otherwise, we will lose our chance and, at the end of the year, we will find ourselves in a situation once more where everyone blames someone else or tries to find mysterious and unexplainable reasons.

Iran: Deputy Says Majles To Check Records of 'Liberal' Deputies

LD2704174096 Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 24 Apr 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "A Number of Deputies Who Have Won Seats are Liberals; The Majles Will Carry out its Duties - Movahhedi- Savoji"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] ['Ali] Movahhedi-Savoji, a Tehran deputy, has announced: A number of liberals have probably been elected to the Majles. The Majles will be investigating this issue by carefully examining files and records and carrying out its duties in this respect.

Movahhedi-Savoji is a deputy from Tehran and is head of the Majles committee on city councils and the country's internal affairs. He was elected to the Fifth

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Majles as a candidate of the Militant Clergy Association [rowhaniyat] of Tehran. He was the 27th candidate to be elected.

In an exclusive interview with our parliamentary correspondent, he also said: There is no doubt that traces of liberal ideology can be found in the thoughts of some people who have entered the Majles. He then said that the reason why these individuals had been elected was that the Guardian Council had to screen all the candidates within a given period of time. This time-limit, he added, meant that the Guardian Council did not have enough time to investigate the records of all those involved and, in this way, some people's competency was accepted whereas it was later discovered that they were not competent to stand in the elections.

Then — without referring to the names of individuals whose competence was approved by the Guardian Council — he said: The Guardian Council has not made any mistakes. It could not spend more time on the screening of the candidates because of the time-limit.

He added: From the point of view of Islam, a genuine Muslim believes in commitment to all the guidelines and instructions of Islam. But there have been some people who, as far as we know, are not all that committed to Islamic guidelines; do not follow the senior jurisconsults and do not feel committed to following the leader. [passage omitted]

Movahhedi-Kermani then referred to the composition of the Fifth Majles and said: Over 60 percent of the deputies in this new round are supporters of the Militant Clergy Association. As to the remaining 40 percent, a percentage do not follow the Militant Clergy Association line at all; others are religious and committed and, we believe that whatever their factional tendencies, they do not pose any danger to the system. We are not worried about this lot. What we are worried about is that there may be individuals who harbor some motive and who have relied on large sums of money and expenditure. Or, who rely on powerful leaders to whom they would be indebted once they find themselves inside the Majles. In this way they would lose their independence.

He also rejected as baseless the claims of the candidates of the Line of the Imam coalition who claimed that they had broken the monopoly of candidates supporting the Militant Clergy Association. He described this as a "publicity posture", saying: They just wanted to spread this idea around in the course of the campaign. Of course, it is meaningless to refer to the Traditional Right, and just as the esteemed leader said, these divisions do not exist in our country since none of the factions or groups who were active in the elections had a systematic charter or constitution. These claims are made by individuals who are ignorant but whose aim is to promote themselves in society.

He added: For these reasons, there will not be a monopoly in the fifth Majles because the Militant Clergy Association has never been and is not monopolistic. Nor are its members or sympathizers.

Movahhedi-Savoji referred to the critics of the method of vetting candidates and said: This supervision is a law which has been passed by the Majles and the Guardian Council. If anyone finds faults with this law, it is then clear that they have problems with the laws of the system. We do not believe in these issues. We believe that the viewpoints and opinions of these individuals are out of line with the fundamentals of the system.

In conclusion, he gave a general assessment of the elections for the fifth Majles and merely criticized the presence and intervention of some individuals who possessed power and resources, saying that this was contrary to the constitution.

Iran: Paper—Mission of Fifth Majles To Defend Revolution Values

LD2804144296 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 24 Apr 96 p 1

[Editorial: "The Mission of the Fifth Majles"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The elections to the Islamic Consultative Assembly [Majles] ended after many ups and downs and the Fifth Majles was formed in a manner befitting the system of the Islamic Republic and as desired by the revolutionary people of Iran. The noticeable and enthusiastic presence of the people at the two stages of the elections were a source of glory for the revolutionary people of Iran and a source of disgrace for the enemies of the people and the enemies of the Islamic revolution throughout the world. Inside the country, too, some people were discredited who, knowingly or unknowingly, propagated the deviant idea that people would not be participating in the elections. Those people who fell for this trap out of ignorance should learn from their mistake and understand that suggestions by groups which are unworthy among the people must not be taken seriously and that their suggestions must not be the basis of analyses. The case of those who knowingly encouraged the deviant ideas is clear.

Now, it is important that the politically active groups and all Majles deputies should be alert to the mission of the Fifth Majles and should place this mission, in the first few days of the new parliament and its subsequent activities, at the top of their agenda. In order to have a more accurate understanding of the mission of the Fifth Majles it is necessary to be aware of three issues.

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First, the presence of forces which have different dispositions is a source of strength for the Fifth Majles. This diverse presence will strengthen the Majles and will allow it to meditate and make firm decisions. This will make the product of the Fifth Majles extremely valuable.

Second, all the groups, intellectual tendencies, and independent deputies who have entered the Majles believe in the revolution and the system of the Islamic revolution; they are the followers of the esteemed leader of the revolution; and they will thus cooperate with each other on this basis. In view of this reality, it is necessary to fight, from today, the inappropriate propaganda and suggestions which try to create false divisions and which seek to suggest that obedience to the leader and loyalty to the system are only for a particular group and not others.

Third, there are people's expectations from their deputies. People went to the polls despite the poisoned propaganda of the enemy. They elected the Fifth Majles deputies with the highest number of votes in a situation where the Untied States and other enemies of Islam and the revolution were hoping that the people would not participate in the elections at all. People believe that they targeted the heart of the Great Satan and its lesser evil accomplices by their popular and heroic participation in the elections. Deputies should also do the same, and the Majles should be the scene of a serious and vigilant struggle against the enemies of Islam and the revolution.

The mission of the Fifth Majles will be clear if, in view of the above points, we ask about the target that the enemies of Islam and the revolution are aiming for today.

The answer is that the heavy offensive of the enemy is directed toward values. Informed people know that the enemies of the Islamic Republic have come to the unanimous conclusion that, after the failure of many methods, the only way to fight the Islamic system and the revolution is to attack its values and to undermine its revolutionary principles. They understand that our revolution is the revolution of values and that if we become vulnerable here we shall be defeated.

Therefore, the mission of the Fifth Majles is to stabilize values. Since the end of the war there have been great efforts to build up the infrastructure. Now, we are approaching the payoff period for these efforts, but there are temptations to turn back against values and principles. This would be a suitable ground to undermine values and forget principles. The enemy too is placing its hopes here. The Fifth Majles must choose those proper methods for the use of the infrastructure which would not damage the values and principles of the revolution, but strengthen them. The Majles must compose and choose a path that would lead to the practical strengthening of these values.

Iran: Deputy Says Independents To Form Majles Majority

LD2904194496 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 25 Apr 96 pp 1, 2

[Article by M. Serjooie: "Independents Will Be in Majority in Fifth Term of the Majles"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran — A deputy-elect yesterday said that no faction but independents will form a majority in the next Majles to go into operation on 27 May.

In an interview with IRAN NEWS, Ms Soheyla Jelodarzadeh said, "We have to wait for a final picture of the make-up of the fifth term of the Majles."

"What I personally feel is that no faction or group but those who are independent and share similar views on country's vital issues will be in the majority in the next Majles," Jelodarzadeh said.

"I'm sure that the next Majles will come out from the domination of one single faction," she said without calling any particular faction or group by name.

The Jame'-ye Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez [Militant Clergy Association — JRM] enjoys the majority in the outgoing Majles.

She fought 8 March and 19 April elections from the Tehran constituency on the support of the Servants of the Construction or the G-6. She is also an active member of the Labor Union officially known as Khaneh Kargar or the Labor House and the Women Society.

Commenting on the necessity of political parties in the country, Jelodarzadeh said, "I support the idea of the formation of political parties based on the principles of the Islamic revolution and Velayat-e Faqih [rule by a supreme jurisconsult]."

When asked about the accusations made against the G-6 by the rivals, she answered, "It was an election propaganda and should end along with the elections."

"I personally know that members of the Servants of Construction are committed and firmly believe in the country's constitution," she said.

"The G-6 members have the same opinion on the fatwa on Salman Rushdie, issued by the late imam and also on the ongoing so-called peace process in the Middle East," Jelodarzadeh said.

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He [as published] paid glowing tribute to President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani and said, "Mr. Hashemi has a long history for the struggle of the revolution... he was close companion of the late imam and now the same of Leader Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i."

"Mr Hashemi is inseparable personality of the Islamic revolution," Jelodarzadeh, 38, said.

She was born in a religious family in Reyshahr, south Tehran, and holds an engineering degree in textile.

Jelodarzadeh said, "The policy of Mr. Hashemi was correct as he used competent persons irrespective of their loyalty with this or that group or faction."

"I'm sure the same will be true in the future too," she claimed.

On the next speaker of the Majles she said, "I believe that a non-faction deputy or the one like Mr. Hashemi will be the next speaker."

"I can notice these qualities in Mr. Hasan Rowhani and Mr. Abdollah Nuri and both are capable of presiding the Majles," Jelodarzadeh, who have a shining record of the revolutionary activities said [sentence as published]. She was active in the revolutionary activities since her school days.

"The one who behaves father-like should be the head of the legislative body," Jelodarzadeh said.

When asked, she said, "I don't think Khanom (Ms) Fa'ezeh Hashemi herself wants to be the speaker of the Majles.

On the ban of foreign satellite she said, "I support the ban as it is an open cultural onslaught and we have to keep our youth safe from a corrupt culture."

The outgoing Majles headed by Speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri passed the ban on the satellites for public use last year.

"Even the people of the Western countries are alarmed and believe that the satellites are creating a havoc for the morality among the youths of our society," Jelodarzadeh said.

"Recently, I was in Switzerland for a labor conference and during my discussion there the delegates from the Western countries voiced their concern over the immoral aspect of the satellites," Jelodarzadeh said.

Iran: Deputy Interviewed on Women's Rights, Role in Majles

LD2904194696 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 27 Apr 96 p 4

[Unattributed article: "Women Deputies in the Majles"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Our weekly has interviewed Ms Jelowdarzadeh, one of the 10 women elected to the Majles, on women's roles in the Majles. We asked her whether the women's group planned to pursue and resolve any of the problems faced by women. She replied:

I personally believe that the deputies in general should discuss women's problems. Paying attention to women's problems is a sign of social justice in society; however, the 10 women members of the parliament cannot tackle this issue alone. Praise be to God and fortunately, there are a number of gentlemen in the Majles parliament now, who are quite familiar with the women's rights in Islam. Some of the regulation of our civil law do not correspond with women's Islamic rights. These should be amended. Their rights in the family and as citizens should be debated too.

House work is not the sole responsibility of women. However, some women might prefer to work in the house, because they like the work or because they love to be with their children. In view of the importance of women's role in the family, the third Majles voted that her contribution should be taken into account at the time of divorce and she should be compensated for her work in the house. Another issue is that a widow receives only one eighth of her husband's wealth and the rest is given to the children and other members of the family. Some widows have to leave the family home without having anywhere else to go to.

We must also give women the same pension rights. I believe, as their first task, the ladies and gentlemen in the Majles — the deputies — should strive towards removing discrimination against women workers. White-collar workers are allowed to retire after 20 years of service, whereas blue-collar women workers have no such rights.

Iran: Former Minister on Composition of New Majles

LD2904194896 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 27 Apr 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] [Former Heavy Industries Minister] Engineer Behzad Nabavi has said: After the second round of Majles elections, vote counts in 59 constituencies showed that 19 followers of the imam's line have been elected as deputies. Also in this round 15

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deputies were elected who are supporters of the Militant Clergy Association. And among the five independent deputies elected in this round, one supports the imam's line coalition.

He added: We do not yet have enough information on 20 other newly elected deputies, but it appears that they are supporters of the Servants of Construction.

Nabavi, himself a member of the Islamic Revolution Mojahedin, stressed: In view of the fact that in the first round of the elections about 24 deputies went to the Majles as followers of the imam's line, now there are 43 deputies in this faction.

He added: No group will have an absolute majority in the fifth Majles. And although the Militant Clergy Association has the highest number of deputies, the speaker of the Majles will be chosen from one of the three main factions of the Militant Clergy Association, the Servants of Construction, and the coalition of the followers of the Imam's line.

Iran: Servants of Construction Claim 51 Seats in Provinces

LD2904194396 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 27 Apr 96 p 6

[Headline: "Servants of Construction: We have won 51 new seats in the provinces"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A member of the Servants of Construction has thanked the public for their high turnout in the second round of the elections for the fifth term of the Majles. He said: Out of 95 seats in the provinces, candidates supported by the Servants of Construction have won 51 seats in the second round.

He added: According to the results of the second round of the elections, nine independent candidates have also won seats in the provinces.

He said: Out of 95 seats in the provinces, 35 candidates were endorsed by the Militant Clergy Association, 10 of which were also on the list of candidates of the Servants of Construction.

He expressed the hope that the Fifth Majles will safeguard the values of the Islamic revolution, follow the line of the Supreme Jurisconsult [Khamene'i], and from a political standpoint it will be a balanced Majles and a forerunner in the development of the country.

Iran: 160 New Deputies in Fifth Majles

LD2904201796 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 27 Apr 96 p 4

[Headline: "160 of the Deputies in the Fifth Majles are New Faces"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Out of 256 deputies elected to the fifth Majles, 160 are new faces and 96 were deputies in the Fourth Majles.

It should be pointed out that, due to polling at eight constituencies having been declared null and void, 14 deputies have still not been elected to the Fifth Majles. All the deputies elected from the provinces of Semnan, Ilam, Kermanshah, Chaharmahal, and Bakhtiyari are new faces. Fars is the only province that has had the least number of changes (out of 17, only eight are new faces). In the second round of the elections 10 women were elected to the Majles. Thus, the number of women in the Fifth Majles is one more than in the fourth. There were four women in the first, second, and third terms of the Majles.

Also, out of 256 deputies who have so far been elected to the Fifth Majles, six served in the first to the fourth terms. They are Hojjaj-e Eslam Nateq-Nuri, Movahhedi-Kermani, Rowhani, Do'a'i, Movahhedi-Savoji, and Mr. Sheybani.

Iran: SALAM Discusses Attack on Editorial Offices

LD2704162396 Tehran SALAM in Persian 23 Apr 96 p 3

[From the "Hello, SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] READER: I want to ask this question of the editorial staff of the newspaper. You think you are true followers of the Imam [Khomeyni], but how do you explain to the Islamic community the fact of self-censorship in the newspaper regarding readers' letters, the news and the silence maintained about the [ruling] power gang? Please answer my question.

SALAM: What are we able to do when some people, who find something contrary to their taste and ideas in the newspaper, allow attacks on the editorial offices at night in order to impose their articles on the newspaper through coercion and threats; and then these brave actions are encouraged by some other publications? Not only are the newspapers taken to court where they have to explain their actions, they also have to surrender to the demands of groups which feel powerful. They have no respect for law and there is no hope that an official will see to this chaos.

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Iran: SALAM Reader Comments on Factions

LD2704163396 Tehran SALAM in Persian 23 Apr 96 p 3

[From the "Hello, SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] READER: You wrote in the "Hello, SALAM" column of 17 April that the Militant Clerics Society [rowhaniyun] pulled out of the election campaign because they did not want to create an election war, and because the political climate was not suitable. These gentlemen say that they were not afraid of the Shah and spent some time in the Shah's prisons, but they are afraid of the Militant Clergy Association [rowhaniyat] whose members think in the way they do. There is a hidden agenda!

SALAM: Their action does not mean that they are afraid of each other. They once cooperated, under the leadership of his eminence the Imam [Khomeyni], to replace the Shah's regime with an Islamic system, and now they are not prepared to enter into an argument that would damage the fundamentals of the system and would allow the enemy to misuse the vulnerable issues inside the country to cause damage.

Iran: SALAM Reader Comments on Elections

LD2704165396 Tehran SALAM in Persian 23 Apr 96 p 3

[From the "Hello, SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] READER: The statements of his eminence Imam Khomeyni are one of the canons of the revolution, but things have taken place which question this principle.

For one thing, the Imam said: political factions in Tehran should not choose candidates for other parts of the country, but influential people in Tehran and Qom have chosen candidates for provincial cities. One of the factions even published a list of its candidates in an afternoon newspaper.

Secondly, in speeches on the elections, the commanders of some armed forces have spoken implicitly for one group and against another. This would undoubtedly affect the forces and contradict his eminence, the Imam, who advised the military and the police against entering into political factionalism.

Iran: SALAM Stresses Importance of Foreign Policy

LD2704173096 Tehran SALAM in Persian 24 Apr 96 p 3

[From the "Hello, SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] READER: Tell the country's officials that the problems of other countries such as Lebanon, Palestine and Kyrgyzstan have nothing to do with us. Could they please busy themselves with the problems of our own country rather than those of other countries?

SALAM: There is no doubt that managing the domestic affairs of the country is a necessary and important responsibility. But this necessity, and even priority, does not prevent us from monitoring issues in the outside world and following these issues with care and vigilance in order to follow a suitable policy in each case. There are such close relations between countries and nations today that sometimes an event in a foreign country could be more influential on our political-economic and cultural situation than events inside the country. Thus, it is not possible to be indifferent to events in other countries.

Iran: Student Skirmishes at University

96LA0177A London KEYHAN in Persian 14 Mar 96 p 3

[FBIS Translated Text] The conflict between the Hezbollah of the Law School of Tehran University, which is supported by KEYHAN newspaper and SOBH weekly, and a group that is called the Gang of Intellectuals by the Hezbollah has escalated. The Hezbollah and quota students in the recent days have asked the university officials to replace the educational associate dean of this college. Those who are regarded as the Gang of Intellectuals of the university by the Hezbollah are in fact learned and effective professors of the university who, despite the conditions governing the universities, have consented to stay in Iran and continue teaching. This group does not allow the Islamic Societies and the Hezbollah into their place of work and oppose their interference in the educational and administrative affairs of the university. Some time ago, Sadeq Zibakalam, a professor of the College of Law, endorsed 'Abdolkarim Sorush and, attacking the Ansar-e Hezbollah and their supporters, said: Those involved in the government in Iran are divided into two groups.

Some of them have neither a political or social vision nor knowledge and essentially do not know what is going on in the world, but some of them are aware of

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the issues of the day and the political balance in the world. Zibakalam regarded Gholamhoseyn Karbaschi and Mohajerani, the deputy to Hashemi-Rafsanjani, to be among this group. Zibakalam also said that someone like Sorush appears and destroys the ideological system of the first group. The Hezbollah and quota students have also published an announcement in which they refer to Ayatollah Jannati, their leader, who has said that the Gang of Intellectuals in the university must be confronted seriously. This announcement states that the Gang of Intellectuals at Tehran University had at one time chosen scientific management as its motto and tried to cut throats with cotton, but today, they have set aside intellectual pleasantries and openly engage in threats and suppression.

In the end, the announcement states that the intellectual professors of the College of Law, after an interview with the U.S. journal, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, in their weakness pretend to be strong. On whom they rely will be a matter to be exposed later. Since the universities were reopened early after the revolution and especially after the death of Ayatollah Khomeyni and the weakening of the Islamic Societies, the College of Law has been one of the most turbulent colleges of Tehran University, and in recent years its deans have changed several times. One of the reasons for the unrest in the College of Law is the open confrontation of the intellectual professors with Hezbollah and quota students who disrupt the education of other students. They want to interfere in the dismissal and appointment of professors and the educational affairs of the college. With the gradual elimination and closure of Islamic Societies and the weakening of the representatives of the religious guardian, the academic institutions are trying to engage only in education in a calm atmosphere.

Iran: SALAM Closing Shows Insecurity

96LA0177B London KEYHAN in Persian 16 Mar 96 p 12

[FBIS Translated Text] It is reported from Tehran that SALAM newspaper was closed for 48 hours. If that newspaper has resumed publication in the meantime, it is clear that this was only a disciplinary punishment to ensure that at the start of the elections, no one would interfere in actions that do not concern the newspaper. However, if the closure lasts longer, it will mean that after the "traditional right," as it calls the group, takes charge of the Majles, this newspaper will have to sing its own swan song, because almost no day goes by that RESALAT does not insult that faction somehow. It should be remembered that this is not the first time that SALAM has been in a shaky situation.

Iran: Hajj Pilgrimage Between 7-21 Apr

96LA0177C London KEYHAN in Persian 21 Mar 96 p 23

[FBIS Translated Text] While the flights of Iranian pilgrims to Saudi Arabia are supposed to start on 19 Farvardin [7 April], Mohammad Reyshahri, the representative of Khamene'i and the supervisor of the Hajj pilgrims, announced: This time, too, as in the past years, we will carry out the ceremonies of cleansing from the heathens during the Hajj ceremonies. The officials of the Islamic Republic, particularly Hashemi-Rafsanjani and 'Ali Akbar Velayati, have said in interviews with foreign reporters in the past few days that Iran is willing to have good relations with Riyadh. Moreover, it is said that the officials of the regime have been seriously engaged in the elections and gaining more seats in the Majles and do not have time to deal with the issue of the Hajj pilgrimage and encouraging the pilgrims to attend the ceremonies of cleansing from the heathens.

The Iranian pilgrims are supposed to be transported to Saudi Arabia from 13 points. According to the officials of the Iranian Airlines Company, the transport of pilgrims to Saudi Arabia will continue until 2 Ordibehesht [21 April].

Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal: Editorial Views Deuba Visit to China

BK3004105696 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 30 Apr 96

[Editorial by Prateek Pradhan: "Room for Expansion of Ties" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Leave alone those who still live in the past and consider China as the country of blue and khaki-clad inhabitants, even those who visit the world's largest communist country are occasionally awe stricken at the astounding progress achieved by its self-formulated economic reform programmes. How could visitors from Nepal, one of the world's poorest countries, remain unimpressed by such strides of economic progress.

After watching a cultural programme at Tian Dynasty Palace at Xian on April 21, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba was heard exclaiming Baaf Re Baaf (wow). In fact the Prime Minister's silent awe must have begun four days before when he had reached Beijing for his week-long official visit. The mushrooming of tall towers and fly-overs all around the historic city must have given him a glimpse of the rate of China's progress.

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It was obvious that the spotlessly clean capital city of Beijing and historic city Xian impressed Deuba and his entourage. However, such impressions reached the climax when Nepalese delegation arrived at their last destination of the visit, the city of Shenzhen, near Hong Kong.

The city has become a dream-come-true in just 15 years. The transformation of Shenzhen, a small coastal town began in 1979 when it was quote, converted & unquote, into a city. The very next year it was designated Special Economic Zone (SEZ), the earliest among the special economic zones of China. Since then Shenzhen has never looked back. It has been progressing by leaps and bounds. And the Nepalese visitors in the Prime Minister's entourage were wondering if a Nepali city could also progress in the same manner.

Spotting MacDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken is not a problem in China. Neither will you face problems in finding big departmental stores containing the world's most expensive designer labels. The only problem is to find a person to communicate in English. However, even this problem seems to be fading fast as lots of new generations are taking up English classes in their schools.

However, China seems to be unsuccessful in curbing the ill effects of capitalism creeping into the country. You can see the growing disparity between the rich and the poor in the streets of Beijing. In Xian you can see beggars, and in Shenzhen aged and kid beggars follow you everywhere you go.

Similarly you can feel the presence of prostitution in Beijing, the capital. The world's oldest profession seems more common in Xian, the recently developing city, whereas you are solicited every hundred meters in Shenzhen, the Chinese parallel of Hong Kong, & quote; It's inevitable if you want progress through economic reforms. You have to accept some of its ill effects, & unquote; explains Lin Liang, an interpreter.

In conclusion there is no doubt that China is going to be an economic super power in the very near future. But, the major concern for Nepal is how are we to benefit from China's emergence as a global economic power. PM Deuba's visit mainly concentrated in trying to reap benefits from China's incredible economic progress.

Though China left nothing wanting and unrolled a red-carpet welcome to our Prime Minister, it seems as if China perceives that it does not stand to gain much economic benefit in joining hands with Nepal. Otherwise, PM Deuba, who travelled to Nepal's immediate northern neighbour via Bangkok would have been successful in convincing China to have a direct air-link between the two countries. After all, the first requirement for good and solid economic ties is air-link.

By providing 80 million Rinminbi, China has definitely shown its goodwill toward Nepal. But, what Nepal really wanted more was economic ties which could sustain Nepal's development and lessened its economic dependence on any one country. In this respect China, unfortunately, did not practise what its own proverb preaches. It says & quote; if you give a fish to a person he will eat it in a day, but if you teach him fishing he will eat for his whole life, & unquote.

Nepal and China signed an agreement to form Nepal-China Non- governmental Cooperation Forum, which can be a landmark, if exploited properly. The Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry from Nepal's side and Confederation of Chinese Commerce and Industry will lead the forum. But, there is doubt that Nepal will derive benefits from this forum, because FNCCI, in the past has signed many such understandings with a number of countries and organisations, but no concrete outcome, except for few reports, have come out. Considering its importance to the nation, the FNCCI must play a more active and positive role if the forum is to provide Nepal with benefits.

Similarly a treaty on establishing a consultation system between the two foreign ministries is also signed. Looking at the busy schedule of Chinese high-level officials, and worldwide interest on China, it seems there is faint chances for such consultations taking place on regular basis or in regular intervals.

Under economic and technical cooperation China has provided 80 million Rinminbi (equivalent to Rs 56 crore), which is definitely a friendly gesture of China toward Nepal, but it's like providing a fish to eat for a day. It will go far but not far enough to undertake sustained development.

However, Deuba's this visit cannot be termed a failure, because he has managed to create a dependable forum for the future cooperation. Now, Nepal, if it really wants to reap economic benefit from China's progress, should work hard to create the necessary environment for generating more cooperation between the two immediate neighbours. It should be in Nepal's interest to explore and identify possibilities of cooperation. It should also be able to convince China, so as to reduce the existing trade deficit and increase the trade volume between the two countries.

The Chinese attitude has, however, proved that it doesn't need communist government in Nepal to develop economic and social cooperation. The Deuba visit proved this in clear and unambiguous terms. The visit

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has given Nepal an elbow room to diversify and expand its ties with China. To what extent we are able to do so will depend on how well the government leaders and officials utilize the opportunities.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Prime Minister Alludes to 'Foreign Hands' in Bus Bombing

BK2904082296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has called upon the people to forge unity among their ranks and foil the evil designs of the enemies of Pakistan who wanted to destroy the stability, integrity, and peace of the country. She was talking to newsmen at the Mayo Hospital in Lahore last night after inquiring about the health of those injured in bomb blast in a passenger bus at Phoolnagar near Lahore yesterday. The prime minister said the involvement of foreign hands in such terroristic and subversive activities cannot be ruled out.

Pakistan: Punjab Minister Suspects Foreign Involvement in Blast

BK2904110396 Islamabad THE NATION in English 29 Apr 96 pp 1, 4

[Report from THE NATION correspondent in Lahore]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore — Punjab Senior Minister Malik Mushtaq Awan has claimed that government has found clue to the terrorists involved in the recent bomb blast incidents and they will be taken to task soon.

He was talking to the newsmen at Mayo Hospital on Sunday [28 April] after visiting the bomb blast victims. He said that the culprits of the Bhai Pheru bomb blast are the same terrorists who had planted bomb at the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital. The senior minister announced that the financial assistance would be provided to the families of the people who have been killed or injured in the bus bomb blast. He also suspected the possibility of some "foreign" hand behind this blast. "Terrorists fled from Karachi may also be involved in this blast", he said.

Mushtaq Awan further said that he was not informed by the Punjab police but he got the news of bomb blast by a telephone call at about 12:15 noon from a DIG [Deputy Inspector General] Islamabad when he reached Sheikhupura. He claimed that the government was fully aware of the activities of the terrorists and had some information that they have planned some terrorist activities on the eve of Eid. "To curb such activities, the government has tightened the security measures at several public places like airport, railway stations, bus stands and other public places but the terrorists planned this about 30 miles away from Lahore," he added.

The senior minister said after the bomb blast at Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital, the security agencies were fully alert but it seems as the terrorists have changed their strategy and made this blast in a bus. "Law enforcement agencies will not become the silent spectators and would arrest these terrorists, who will be given the exemplary punishment," he added. He further said government is determined to maintain law and order situation in the province and have decided to start massive search in the city to arrest the terrorists and house-to-house search will be carried out in Lahore in this regard.

The minister further said the government have canceled the Eid leaves of the employees of security and law enforcing agencies. He sought the help of masses against terrorist activities.

He said government has already directed the transporters to buy bomb detectors and hand them over to their bus conductors so that the lives of the passengers could be saved.

To a question whether the bus blast could be a reaction of the blasts in India on the eve of elections, he said the blasts in India were their internal matter. To a query that the Mayo Hospital's administration was not informed about bomb blast incident so that it could make arrangements for the injured people, he said he would initiate a high-level enquiry in this regard.

Mayo Hospital was connected with the police through wireless and providing no prior information about the bomb blast to the hospital authorities was the height of negligence. "Irresponsible and negligence would not be spared," he added.

Pakistan: Report Warns Indian Missiles Could Target U.S. Bases

BK2604114596 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 26 Apr 96 p 9

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD: India is rapidly developing advanced versions of Agni missile, with a target range of 1,550 miles, besides conducting intensive research on Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles, according to defence experts here.

The advance versions of Agni missile could hit targets as farther afield as Tehran and American bases in the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, let alone any part of Pakistan.

Even United States Defence Secretary William Perry has expressed serious concern over India's craze for

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missile production, nuclear weapons and its capabilities to produce chemical and biological weapons.

The US defence secretary remarked that the development of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons by India had potential to undercut broader US and international non-proliferation objectives. Pursuing his point of view, he expressed his apprehension that India's nuclear programme would "serve as a dangerous example for nations in other regions as the of transferring technology cannot be ruled out." Justifying the US pressure, he said, "the US had important security interests in South Asia, including preventing another Indo-Pak war and enhancing regional stability."

Even the United States campaign against India's acquisition of missile technology through the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTRC) could not affect the rapid development of India's missile and nuclear programme. One reason for this failure is because India's missile programme has never been the major focus of American policy. The other factor is that Germany, France, the United States and Russia are responsible for technology transfer to India in the fields of satellite launching vehicles and guidance system.

India's integrated guided missile development programme includes short (Prithvi) and medium range (Agni-LRBM) [Long Range Ballistic Missile] projects. India has already successfully tested an advanced version of the Prithvi missile on January 28, 1996. Prithvi 2 has a range of 250 kilometres. Agni, which is an intermediate range missile, was first tested in 1992, when it recorded a range of 950 miles.

An advanced version of Agni is expected to have a range of 1,550 miles. Launched from Cochin in south-west India, the Agni could reach the US naval base at Diego Garcia in the southern Indian Ocean. Launched from Kutch it could reach Basra, Riyadh and Tehran. From Delhi, Kazakhstan, from Arunachal Pradesh, Beijing and from Madras, Bangkok and Sumatra.

In addition to the above, India is conducting research for developing Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) programmes. Successful development of the polar satellite launch vehicle, has already given India a rocket capability, which is powerful enough for an ICBM. In this connection, Russia is providing technology to India.

All these missiles are nuclear payload carrying vehicle and are part of nuclear weapon system.

Pakistan: Envoy to India Describes Kashmir Polls as 'Farce, Sham'

BK2904112596 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 29 Apr 96 p 12

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi — Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi Riaz Khokar described as "farce, sham and meaningless" the upcoming polls for six Indian Lok Sabha seats in the strife torn state of Kashmir.

In an interview to Indian Abroad News Service (IANS) Sunday, Khokar wondered how India could claim to be holding an election in Kashmir when "it (India) has 600,000 troops in place, and you cordon it (Kashmir) off, bring people on gun points and not even allow international observers."

"It would be a lot easier and would save the Government of India a lot of money if it were to stuff the ballot boxes in Delhi and announce any results it wants to announce," he added.

People of Kashmir have rejected the elections, even Farooq Abdullah, he pointed out has rejected the polls.

Citing the Kashmir's opposition to holding of polls Khokar said the "core issue was not about who should be the chief minister, the problem is far more fundamental and it is about their right to self-determination."

He said "Pakistan is ready to give Kashmiris the right of self- determination," and asked "why is India afraid to do so ... your (India's) elections are totally irrelevant and in my judgment they will complicate the matters further (between India and Pakistan)," he added.

To a question, Khokar said Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao "had no policy towards Pakistan at all". During the past four years that he had been in New Delhi, literally nothing had happened", he pointed out.

Illustrating the non-relationship, he said "I hardly got to the Ministry of External Affairs. Your high commissioner (in Islamabad) hardly goes to our foreign office ... socially, we are nice to each other ... but some times even there, there are breakdowns ... so all I'm saying is that I am not sure what your foreign policy is about, I'm sure you have a foreign policy, but I haven't discovered it".

Lambasting India's readiness to talks about "everything under the sun, except Kashmir", Khokar said, "we are not interested in discussing pop music with India, we are not interested in discussing weather conditions. We are interested in discussing serious matters."

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He stressed the need to resolve the Kashmir dispute on the basis of the UN resolutions. And because India has "choked" and "clogged" all channels of discussion on Kashmir dispute, he said Pakistan has been constrained to raise the issue in various international fora, including the United Nations.

Answering a question, Pakistan's high commissioner favoured a third party's intervention for the solution of the Kashmir dispute.

Replying to a question on alleged Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) activities in parts of India and Indian-held Kashmir, the high commissioner said he marveled at the Indian official who managed to "paint a larger than life picture of the ISI".

"I really wish that it (ISI) was so efficient. From creating trouble in Kashmir ... you have ascribed to its capabilities to move cyclones, create floods, plagues and explosions in manholes" he quipped.

Khokar, who spent nearly four years as Pakistan envoy here, refused to be drawn into a discussion on the possible post-election scenarios in India.

Assuring that Pakistan would deal with any government in Delhi, Khokar said "whether it is a government with little saffron (Hindus' holy colour) or heavy dose of it, is immaterial to us".

Pakistan: Asif Ali Comments on Kashmir, Afghanistan, U.S. Ties

BK2604160396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 26 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali has urged the United Nations to ensure the implementation of its resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir, because the Indian occupation of the territory is contrary to international morality, legality, and the UN Charter. In an interview with an Italian newspaper, (LA-POSSE REPUBLICA), in Islamabad, he categorically rejected any third option for Kashmir, saying there is no room for this in the UN resolutions.

The foreign minister reiterated that Pakistan cannot be expected to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty unilaterally. In this connection, he spoke of the proposals presented by Pakistan to India to make South Asia a nuclear-free zone.

About Afghanistan, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said that peace in this neighboring country is equally vital to Pakistan, which remains available to play any role in cooperation with other friendly countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the United Nations to bring about peace and stability in Afghanistan.

On Pakistan-U.S. relations, the foreign minister said passage of the Brown Amendment represents a moral victory for Pakistan, which will further strengthen bilateral relations. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali described the future of the Economic Cooperation Organization [ECO] as very encouraging and said that important agreements will be signed at the ECO summit conference in Ashgabat next month.

Pakistan: MQM, Jamaat-i-Islami Announce Plan To Resist Government

BK2804151696 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 28 Apr 96 pp 1, 5

[Report by Salahuddin Haider]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KARACHI, April 27—MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] Suffering from prolonged isolation, joined hands with Jamaat-i-Islami today and announced a three-point formula of resistance against the government.

Its alliance, still very embryonic, is for a limited objective of defying the latest ban on collection of hides and skin of sacrificial animals in the Sindh cities of Karachi and Hyderabad, and forcing the government to undo the amendments in the Sindh local bodies ordinance.

But the understanding, announced after a meeting of their representatives here, has the portent of developing into a broader accord for support to each other in the municipal elections which the government has been planning for autumn.

The two sides, who had been sworn enemies of each other, got together after two weeks of silent diplomacy during which letters were exchanged between Jamaat's professor Niamtullah and the MQM's founder Altaf Hussain, living in London. They agreed to forget their bitterness and named a panel of experts which held talks here at the local office of the Jamaat and announced their commitment to work together.

This agreement, initially will be for protecting the interests of the urban areas of Sindh, but Professor Ghafoor Ahmad, the number two in the Islamic party, said that they will meet again on May 8 at the MQM headquarters in Azizabad.

The MQM team which held negotiations for an hour with their former adversaries, was the same which had held parleys with the government last year. It comprised Ajmal Dehlvi, Sheikh Liaquat Hussain, Tariq Javed, Shoaib Mokhari, and Qazi Khalid Ali. On the Jamaat side were Professor Ghafoor, the party's Karachi chief, Professor Niamatullah, former MPA [Member of

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Provincial Assembly] Iftikhar Ahmad, and Mr Mehdi. The two sides also agreed that the state of repression, let loose in Karachi, must now end, and that the government should withdraw its ban on the collection of hides and skin, which it had imposed in flagrant violation of the country's constitution, the laws of the land, and those enshrined in the Islamic Sharia.

They simultaneously termed the recent decision to decentralise the Karachi metropolitan corporation into five zonal organisations, and putting them under bureaucratic control, as undemocratic. Similarly, the law authorising the takeover of the Karachi water and sewerage board by the Sindh government, was described as unwarranted.

Professor Ghafoor, reading out a joint text, reported complete unanimity between the negotiating parties that the Sindh government had acted rather hastily and got passed the legislations relating to the Karachi metropolitan corporation and the Karachi water board.

They asked their workers to ignore the ban on collection of hides and skin of sacrificial animals, because the money earned through their sales, was used for welfare projects, and since it was a purely religious activity, it required no permission from the authorities.

Pakistan: Editorial Decries Activities of India's RAW in Sindh

BK2904141096 Islamabad AL-AKHBAR in Urdu 29 Apr 96 p 3

[Editorial: "RAW's Propaganda Drive in Sindh"]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to press reports, Research and Analysis Wing [RAW], the Indian intelligence agency, has launched a major propaganda drive inside Sindh to deprive the Kashmiri freedom movement of the Pakistani people's support, fragment Sindh, and trigger sectarian clashes in Pakistan. In this connection, the Sindh government has seized objectionable issues of 11 journals published with RAW's assistance. The RAW published and circulated in Sindh a letter purportedly written by Ali Mohammad Dar, a leader from occupied Kashmir, to Omar Farooq, All Parties Hurriyat Conference chairman. Everyone, to a great extent, is already aware of what has been cited in the aforementioned report.

It is not an obscure fact that the notorious Indian agency RAW is focusing all of its attention on Karachi, especially on internal Sindh. We have already published in AL-AKHBAR the picture of the Indian currency being circulated along the borders with Sindh — well inside Pakistani territory as well as in Indian territory — through which daily transactions are being carried out. This indeed is clear proof that India is gradually being accommodated in internal Sindh through various means. It was not long ago that India had laid a similar trap in the erstwhile East Pakistan and generously assisted a handful of separatists there. India is also making headway today in trying this same experiment in internal Sindh. Unfortunately, the attention of the federal and state governments is devoted entirely to political issues only. They are either totally oblivious to the threats that can affect basic issues, such as the stability and independence of our beloved country, or they do not go to the trouble of paying attention to those issues. Even so, we would appeal to the Sindh government and relevant federal agencies to be kind enough to keep a strict watch on these despicable RAW activities in Sindh and to take appropriate steps to counter them.

Pakistan: Editorial Backs Tough Action Against Religious Terrorists

BK3004003096 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 29 Apr 96 p 10

[Editorial: "The Arrest of a Five-Member Gang of Terrorists"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the instructions of Chaudhary Sajjad Ahmad, senior superintendent of police [SSP], the Lahore police raided the H Block and J Block areas under the jurisdiction of the Gulshan Ravi police station and arrested five alleged terrorists with a large quantity of sophisticated and lethal weapons, including rocket launchers, grenade launchers, hand bombs, and Kalashnikov rifles. These terrorists put up a stiff resistance before they were arrested by the police led by Police Superintendent Dr. Tariq Khokhar. The arrested persons are said to be associated with Sipah-i-Sahaba [fundamentalist Sunni Muslim organization]. Four of them are residents of Lahore.

They have divulged the names of five persons — a religious scholar, a doctor, and two or three businessmen — who had been paying them hefty sums as compensation for their terrorist activities. They, like Niaz Beg, wanted to build a fort-like headquarters of the Sipah-i-Sahaba in Ghaziabad, Lahore Cantonment. During the interrogation, they confessed to being involved in 21 incidents, including the murders of: Shatim Rasool, Manzoor Masih, Sibte Hasan, and the superintendent of the Kot Lakhpat jail; Shi'ite leaders Sikander Shah, Dr. Mohammad Ali Naqvi, Professor Aftab Naqvi, and Syed Sajid Gilani; Excise Department Director Syed Muhsin Naqvi; Mustafa Jawa, and several other personalities. The suspects also confessed to carrying out murderous attacks against Dawat-i-Islami chief Ilyas Qadiri and retired police officer Mushtaq Hussain, who escaped unharmed. The suspects had also planned to at-

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tack Shi'ite Muslim mourning processions during the month of Muharram and to incite sectarian clashes.

Regrettably, the role of militant religious groups in heinous incidents has been increasing in the country. One could hardly imagine that such acts of terrorism could be committed in the name of religion. Religious groups have also been found to be involved in ghastly incidents in Karachi. Having been successfully cornered by the Karachi administration, these groups have found havens in different parts of the country, particularly in Lahore, which has become the center of their activities.

The murder of persons belonging to any religious school of thought can easily spark off sectarian clashes, which might ultimately endanger the country's peace and security. The fire of sectarianism sometimes becomes extremely severe and out of the government's control and even leads to the collapse of the government itself. Because Lahore is the nerve center of Punjab, disturbing peace and order in this city becomes the first target of the enemies. The Lahore police, under the supervision of SSP Haji Habibur Rahman, had also arrested several gangs of terrorists in the past that were involved in heinous crimes, including religious, sectarian clashes. These suspects also included some terrorists who had fled Karachi.

Current SSP Chaudhary Sajjad has launched a severe crackdown on criminal elements, arresting several assassins of religious and political leaders, educators, and businessmen and tracking down their mentors over a very period. It has been proven that certain people financially support the activities of these religious terrorists. What is needed now is to track down and expose all of the contacts of these terrorists and to try them according to the law of the land to eliminate terrorism.

Tracking down persons involved in specific incidents of mysterious killings is a singular achievement of the current Lahore police chief. The recovery of industrialist Shahid Sethi, who was kidnapped for ransom, is also undoubtedly a commendable achievement of the Lahore police. The manner in which Shahid Sethi was abducted and the ransom being sought from his next of kin had created panic and fear among Lahore residents. Abductors often kill their hostage if ransom is not paid according to their demand. The two suspects arrested by the police also possessed a list of 120 rich persons whom they had planned to kidnap for ransom. If the Lahore police continue to display their current level of promptness and efficiency, they will greatly succeed in reducing crimes and deterring and discouraging criminal elements in the city.

Pakistan: French Mirage Team Due To Arrive 6 May for Talks

BK2904110796 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 29 Apr 96 p 12

[Report by Shakil Shaikh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — A French team, with a revised proposal for the sale of about three dozen Mirage 2000-5 fighter bombers, reaches Pakistan on 6th May.

According to official sources, the French delegation will comprise both technical and non-technical members, and it shall hold talks with Pakistan Air Force officials. The team will also meet officials of the Defence Production Division during its several days stay here," added the sources.

In the past, officials of both the countries have met several times in a bid to formalize proposals for the sale/purchase of the Mirage 2000-5's, because Pakistan is looking for a possible replacement of the embargoed U.S. F-16's.

The Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC) has already approved the proposal to shop for Dassault's Mirages, with French President Chirac having granted political approval during Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's one day visit to France several months back.

However, officials conceded that major irritants in the deal were the high price tag of the aircraft and the systems and equipment to be installed on these aircraft.

Presently, Pakistan has only 34 multi-role fighters as against India's 36. However, India's wish list includes two more multi-role fighter squadrons, which will significantly tilt the balance towards India which has a strength of almost 3:1 as far as the total number of aircraft are concerned.

Pakistan, said official sources, is trying to diversify its sources. Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh will visit Moscow some time in the third week of May this year for holding talks with Russian leaders on a number of important issues, including acquisition of Russian aircraft.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has sold several million dollars worth of Brooks/Garcia frigate spares to Brazil, which is the only operator of this class of frigates apart from the U.S. Navy.

We have sold the spares of these frigates as Pakistan no longer required the parts due to the non-renewal of leases of these frigates.

These spares were transferable, said informed sources.

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In the recently-held Washington talks on the Financial and Programme Management Review, Pakistan requested the Defence Security Assistance Agency (DSAA) to refund approximately $46 million paid after the embargo towards FMS [Foreign Military Sales] pertaining to the follow-on support of the nine U.S. ships. The ships have already been returned to the U.S.

However, there is still a problem regarding those spare parts of these frigates that are lying in the United States.

The U.S. Navy, said official sources, has now informed Pakistan that the list containing details of the spares lying in the United States was sent to Brazil for ascertaining its interest.

"Brazil is not offering a good price for these spares," said informed sources, who added that the list of these spares will also be compared against Gearing and other classes of frigates for commonality." A reply from Brazil on the offer is still awaited, but Pakistan has no interest in these spares and has conveyed its desire to the U.S. that these should be sold and refunds be returned to Pakistan," said official sources.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Colombo Bans Alleged Cambodian Coup Plotter From Entry

BK2904113896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] General Sin Song, alleged coleader of the Cambodian coup bid in 1994, who had been detained in Thailand for the past 18 months, left Bangkok for Sri Lanka, his lawyer said. Earlier, Sri Lankan Embassy officials said that the two-week business visa issued to Sin Song has been withdrawn after the embassy learned of his political background through press reports. Thai immigration authorities and the Interpol office confirmed that he had left the country. Lawyer Karun Sai-ngam said he had accompanied Sin Song and five traveling companions to Bangkok International Airport where he saw them board a direct flight to Colombo.

In Colombo, the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry said today Sin Song has been banned from entering the country, because he had obtained a visa under false representation. Sin Song's application was made with four other Cambodian nationals through a travel agency for a visa to look into investment opportunities. The embassy officials said that Sin Song, a former interior minister, holds a Cambodian passport issued in Phnom Penh on 8 April and valid for five years. Sin Song was sentenced in absentia to 20 years in prison in Cambodia along with suspected coup plotter Prince Norodom Chakkrapong, the son of King Norodom Sihanouk. Prince Chakkrapong found asylum in France following the king's intervention.

Sri Lanka: British Police Seek Aid in Probing Explosives Shipment

BK2904040796 Colombo SUNDAY OBSERVER in English 28 Apr 96

[Report by Jayampathy Jayasinghe — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The British CID [Criminal Investigation Department] has sought the assistance of the Sri Lankan CID in probing the suspected shipment of a large stock of explosives to the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] by a London-based firm, police sources told the 'Sunday Observer'.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (CID) T.V. Sumanasekera and a team of top CID officials travelled to Scotland Yard a fortnight ago in connection with the investigations.

Scotland Yard believes that an Ukrainian-owned company based in London may have shipped a total of 60 tonnes of explosives to the LTTE in Sri Lanka, police officials here said.

"Although there is no evidence yet to link the LTTE to the explosives we are investigating the matter," an official disclosed.

The British CID are currently investigating the Ukrainian company which was floated in London in 1994 and whose office there is apparently staffed by two Tamil Sri Lankans designated as company directors. The British police are wondering whether this company was responsible for supplying the explosives to the Tigers.

It will be recalled that Ukrainian-based groups were earlier suspected of helping transfer an entire shipload of arms and explosives for the LTTE from a Black Sea port.

Police however declined to divulge further details as it would hamper the on-going investigations.

Scotland Yard is understood to assisting the Sri Lankan CID sleuths by placing personnel and vehicles at their disposal to facilitate investigations in London.

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Sri Lanka: International Officials Alerted to LTTE 'Narco Terrorists'

BK2904042896 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 27 Apr 96

[LANKAPUVATH report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo — The International Police Organisation (INTERPOL) has alerted ports and airports throughout the world to maintain maximum vigilance in order to detect and apprehend thousands of LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) narco terrorists who are engaged in the smuggling of heroin and in gun- running to fund their campaign of brutal terror in Sri Lanka.

Police said that members of Interpol who have pledged to co- operate in the fight against international terrorism, now exchange a high level of intelligence which is sent to all Interpol bureaux.

Latest Interpol reports indicated that the LTTE is under tremendous pressure from international law enforcement agencies who have cracked down on Tiger terrorism in their respective countries.

According to latest statistics, around 4,000 LTTE drug traffickers are now serving jail terms in prisons, particularly in the Indian sub-continent, Europe and the UK.

Countries worldwide have cracked down on LTTE terrorist activities and in many of them, the movement of LTTE cadres is restricted.

Immigration laws have been tightened in order to prevent LTTE cadres from entering Interpol member-countries while those who are already there and have sought asylum, are being sent back to Sri Lanka, as authorities in countries such as Switzerland are of the view that is it safe for them to return.

Sri Lanka: Security Concerns Force Police To Ban May Day Processions

BK3004115696 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tomorrow is international labor day. The workers in Sri Lanka will join their counterparts in the rest of the world with a keen enthusiasm to commemorate this day. Arrangements have already been finalized for the holding of May Day rallies. These will be conducted in Colombo and other parts of the country. Political parties and trade unions have made arrangements to hold over 35 rallies. The People's Alliance rally will be held at the Town Hall Ground in Colombo chaired by Prime Minister Srimavo Bandaranaike. President Chandrika Kumaratunga will also address the gathering. The United National Party rally will be held at Avissawella presided over by its leader Ranil Wickremasinghe. May Day meeting of the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna will be at Nugegoda. The Janatha Vimukhthi Peramuna meeting is scheduled at the BRC Grounds in Colombo.

Meanwhile, the police have announced that no processions will be permitted on May Day this year. This decision has been taken in view of the current situation in the country.

Sri Lanka: President Returns From PRC Visit, Hong Kong Stopover

BK2904041796 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 29 Apr 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga who concluded her six day official visit to China returned home on April 27 afternoon.

Meanwhile, Daya Lankapura in Hong Kong said Kumaratunga on her way back from China had a brief stop over in Hong Kong and had talks with a group of leading businessmen and industrialists there

Representatives from 20 leading industrial and business ventures in and around Hong Kong attended the meeting held at Hong Kong's Regent hotel.

During the talks the president explained in detail the political stability existing in Sri Lanka and tax relief and other concessions granted to foreign investors.

Board of Investment chairman Tilan Wijesinghe explained the tax, duty and other concessions and infrastructure facilities provided to industrialists and investors on a case by case basis.

Wijesinghe said the talks enabled Hong Kong businessmen to clear many of their problems and the indications are that they would soon launch investments here.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, Director (Political Division) Ministry of Foreign Affairs K. Godage, Director (Asia) Tissa Wijeratne, Sri Lanka Ambassador in China T.H.W. Woutersz and additional secretary to the president Cyril Gunapala were also associated with the President during the talks.

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Sri Lanka: President's PRC Visit Termed 'Complete Success'

BK2704130396 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 27 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga ends her six-day state visit to the People's Republic of China today. This tour provided her an opportunity to hold discussions with President Jiang Zemin and Prime Minister Li Peng and other leaders as well as the leaders of two important provinces there. In addition to political talks, the president focused special attention on Sri Lanka-China economic ties. The main objective of her visit was particularly to attract Chinese investors. Chinese businessmen pointed out that these ties could be promoted by launching joint ventures of direct investment programs with Sri Lanka's public and private sectors.

In a statement to radio on the result of the tour, Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said that President Kumaratunga's visit was a complete success. The minister said that the president, the prime minister, and the entire Chinese leaders had special regards for the Sri Lankan president. The Chinese Government expected to further consolidate these ties under President Kumaratunga. Chinese authorities lauded Sri Lanka's policy toward their country. Sri Lanka accepts only one China. The foreign minister said that this was reiterated by the president during her discussions with Chinese leaders. Mr. Kadirgamar added that the Chinese leadership greatly appreciated Sri Lanka's voting in favor of China during the International Human Rights Congress in Geneva while the president was touring the People's Republic of China.

Sri Lanka: Indian Daily Reports LTTE Suicide Squad Sent to India

BK2604141296 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 26 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists are reported to have sent suicide bombers to India to kill leading politicians. THE TRIBUNE newspaper reported today two or three women members of the LTTE had infiltrated the country; however, the daily did not say when this happened. It said that they reportedly belong to the group's Black Tiger suicide squad. The suicide bombers have VVIP's [Very Very Important Persons] and major political leaders as their target. It gave no details. It is not clear if the reported LTTE mission was timed to coincide with India's staggered general elections, which begins tomorrow. The report by THE TRIBUNE quoted unidentified intelligence sources.

Sri Lanka: Crucial 'Hearts and Minds' Battle Being Waged in the North

BK2604111396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 26 Apr 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The "hearts and minds" battle which conflict management experts have been harping on for quite some time now, is apparently being waged by the Sri Lankan security forces in the North. Some 250,000 civilians who were held captive by the Tigers in the aftermath of Riviresa I in areas like Thenmarachchi and Vadamarachchi, are reportedly heading back to their homes in Valikamam in the wake of Riviresa II. Some of these civilians are said to be openly defying the Tigers and boldly saying "No" to their "diktat".

What was once believed to be impossible is happening now: Northern civilians who were liberated from the clutches of the Tigers are now preferring to go back to Valikamam, which is under the control of the Lankan security forces. They apparently do not consider the security forces their natural enemies. "Simply incredible", a pleasantly surprised General Anuruddha Ratwatte, who has kept his promise of freeing crucial areas of the North of the Tiger menace, told a press conference. "They really seem to be liberated. They are smiling, singing and shouting. There is a change of attitude in the people", he explained.

If this "hearts and minds" battle could be completed, half the war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] could be won. All that will be left to accomplish will be the permanent neutralization of the LTTE, which in the event, would not enjoy any popular sympathy. Some of the most important tasks ahead are to ensure the material well being of the liberated civilians and to retain their goodwill. These are two of the most effective means of alienating the civilian populace from the Tigers.

Going by the compliments the security forces have won from even the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC], over their clean operation in the North, this is not too formidable a task. There were reports that the ICRC has commended the Sri Lanka Air Force for confining their attacks to LTTE bases only. Thus civilians have suffered little or no harm so far, in Riviresa II. This is the stuff that professionally conducted wars are made of and the most effective means of gaining ground in the "hearts and minds" battle.

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It is also important to render fully operational the civilian administration in areas which are liberated from the Tigers. This is an essential condition for re-establishment of normalcy. No liberation process is complete without the civilians running their own affairs. While security has to be maintained in the liberated areas by the armed forces, local self-government should be encouraged through the revival of the relevant local bodies.

Sri Lanka: Tamil Rebels Report Fierce Clashes, Flight of Refugees

BK3004113496 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 26 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Fierce clashes are taking place between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] and Sri Lankan troops at many places in Thenmarachchi. According to available reports, the LTTE launched attacks from many fronts against troops who have been trying to advance. It is learned that the Sri Lankan troops have suffered major losses. While troops are attempting to advance from many fronts, the Liberation Tigers have been arduous in sending those who are fleeing from military terrorism to Wanni safely. Through constant attacks, the Tigers have been thwarting troop attempts to capture the travel routes used by people. The troops have advanced in some areas of Chavakachcheri, Kachachai, Kodigamam, though LTTE cadres have the Kodigamam-Point Pedro route under their control.

As usual, a large number of refugees are fleeing from the intense missile and bomb attacks in Vadamarachchi. There has also been an exodus of refugees toward Kilali.

Meanwhile, the Kilali boat service has come under the constant attack of the Sri Lankan Air Force. An MI-24 type helicopter gunship attacking boats was challenged by Tigers escorts. The helicopter gunship is reported to have retreated with minor damage.

In the meantime, civilians have recovered bodies washed ashore at Kilali, believed to be those of civilians killed in the Sri Lankan Air Force attacks on boats. There are no further reports on this.

Civilians arrested by Sri Lankan troops in areas of their aggression are categorized according to their age and sex and detained separately. Even the old, young men, and women from the same family are separated and confined. This has been done at the home for the aged in Kaitadi. The young men and women who are separated from others are apprehensive about their safety.

Sri Lankan troops deployed at Manal Aru locality launched missile attacks at the Chemmalai area the day before yesterday. One civilian was killed and another grievously injured.

The military has suspended the Mannar-Kalpitiya boat service. Because of this, there has been severe shortage of food and essential goods. There is an acute food shortage in the Kilinochchi District as well. As the food stocks have depleted, the Kilinochchi deputy government officer has issued an urgent appeal to the Ministry of Essential Services through the international agency, CARE.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan troops are engaged in a propaganda drive using people arrested in Velikamam during the military operation, Riviresa-One. These people are forced to write to relatives who live abroad, praising the government and the military. They are also forced to say that they are being looked after well by the military and that those who fled should return. The letters written right in front of the troops are addressed and dispatched by the troops themselves.

Thanks.

The Tigers' aspirations: motherland of Tamil Eelam.

Sri Lanka: Government Troops Advance Into Terrorist-Held Areas

BK2604142596 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 26 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Troops of Operation Riviresa Two, backed by tanks and air cover, resumed advancing into terrorist-held areas yesterday in the north amidst resistance. The operational headquarters say that terrorists resisted initially, but troops overcame their resistance and forced them to flee the area. At least five terrorists were killed yesterday. The Army march began even as tens of thousands of people poured into areas that security forces liberated from the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] in the Jaffna peninsula. The military suffered no casualties in the latest round of fighting.

The offensive code name Riviresa Two was launched to clear up paths for the displaced civilians to return to their homes. Ground troops confirmed that more than 12 terrorists were wounded. The security forces and the police are providing food, medicine, and other essential items to civilians who are returning to Walikamam. The operation continues.

The return of civilians who fled Walikamam has been described as a major setback for the LTTE. Political analysts say the people of Walikamam have shown their disagreement with the LTTE. One of the leaders of a political party in the north said that this is the

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first time the LTTE had suffered a defeat of this nature. Tens of thousands of Tamil civilians who fled Walikamam during Operation Riviresa One and lived in Thenamarachchi and Vadamarachchi are now returning to their native villages. This politician said that the LTTE terrorists tried to persuade the returnees to remain in (Thenamarachch) and Vadamarachchi. However, the civilians expressed their dissatisfaction of the policies of the Tigers and returned to their homes.

Political analysts further said that the LTTE were now facing two problems — the Tamil civilians have rejected the LTTE openly and discard the terrorist orders. At the same time, the picture painted by the LTTE in the international community that they were the saviors of the Tamil people has become a total misinformation. However, the LTTE is continuing their struggle to maintain their status as the saviors of the Tamil community. The analysts say that the LTTE blacked out all incidents regarding the return of civilians to Walikamam over their clandestine radio. They said that this itself was enough for the LTTE to accept defeat.

Sri Lanka: Air Force Strikes LTTE Camps; Jaffna Peninsula 'Sealed Off'

BK2904042296 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 29 Apr 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Air Force last week destroyed Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] jungle bases in Batticaloa and Polonnaruwa districts killing at least nine Tigers and wounding 20, a military spokesman in Colombo said.

Ground troops and intelligence sources have confirmed that the LTTE casualties were four killed at Illupaiadichenai, 17 km west of Batticaloa, five killed and 10 wounded at Thonduvilcholai, 22 km west of Batticaloa and four killed and six wounded at Sewanpitiya, 10 km west of Welikanda in Polonnaruwa district in these air strikes, the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, Riviresa Two operation continues in the Jaffna peninsula.

Displaced civilians who were at the mercy of the LTTE before this operation are now trekking back to their homes in the liberated Valikamam division. Security forces and police are assisting those returning to settle back in their homes.

The LTTE in the peninsula now reeling under continued assaults by security forces suffered a heavy blow to their morale when some 400 members of the Jaffna hospital staff who had moved to Point Pedro before the retaking of Jaffna, returned to Jaffna hospital on Saturday, military sources said. These personnel include 41 doctors who had to leave the hospital on the orders of the LTTE.

Troops are now consolidating in the newly captured areas in the Thennamarachchi division.

The national news agency Lankapuvath quoted official sources as saying that the government servants in Jaffna had resumed their normal duties after a long absence. Commercial banks were functioning, the CWE [cooperative wholesale establishment] outlets were operating and food and other essential supplies were being distributed to the people, who, for the first time in 13 years, were receiving their full rations.

Lankapuvath also said that the entire peninsula has now been sealed off by the troops of Operation Riviresa Two. This includes the LTTE boat route from Kilali to Punchiparanthan across the Jaffna lagoon.

Sri Lanka: Government Restores 'Normalcy' to Parts of Jaffna Peninsula

BK2904124896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 29 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has restored normalcy in several parts of the Jaffna peninsula. Displaced civilians have returned to their homes after a lapse of 13 years. Some 400 Tamil employees of the Jaffna hospital joined thousands of civilians pouring into government-held areas of the Jaffna peninsula after the Army's latest drive, which began nine days ago. The unexpected influx of medical staff, including 41 doctors, came as the infantry troops backed by tanks and helicopter gunships consolidated in areas liberated from the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]. The government agent of Jaffna, who was forced to leave last December by the Tiger terrorists, has also returned and resumed duties at the Jaffna kachcheri [district headquarters]. LANKAPUVATH reported that government servants in Jaffna have already resumed their normal duties after a long absence. Commercial banks are now open for business, while the Cooperative Wholesale Establishment outlets are distributing food and other essential supplies. Thirteen police stations have been opened in the Jaffna peninsula to help restore civilian administration. In the past, the LTTE carried out terror tactics in the peninsula to subdue the people. During their illegal administration of the peninsula, 60 percent of the food sent by government was taken over by the LTTE. With the return of the civilians, the situation is now changing and there is a sense of relief among the people.

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Official sources told LANKAPUVATH that the remaining pockets of LTTE in the Jaffna peninsula will be cleared soon. The entire peninsula has now been sealed off by the troops of Operation Riviresa Two. This includes the LTTE boat route from Kilali to Punchiparanthan across the Jaffna lagoon. The Operational Headquarters of the Defense Ministry says that troops are in the process of consolidating in the newly captured areas in the Thennamarachchi division in the north. During clearing operations, troops recovered three heavy vehicles, one Mauser [pistol], and 4,000 50-kg bags of flour.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lanka Air Force fighter aircraft effectively attacked LTTE's jungle bases in the Batticaloa and Polonnaruwa districts. Ground troops and intelligence sources confirmed that around 10 terrorists were killed and about 20 wounded during these air attacks in the past week.

Sri Lanka: Editorial Defends Censorship of Military News

BK3004011196 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 30 Apr 96

[Editorial: "Naive Probings" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister, Prof. G.L. Peiris, has reminded the world's most powerful democracy about a duty no responsible government could afford to disregard at a time of war: The placing of temporary restrictions on the country's media in regard to issues which could have serious implications for the nation's security and well being.

"We believe that there cannot be a flourishing, vibrant democracy without the free flow of information and that is why in the new constitution that we are preparing for the country, we have specifically recognised the right to information as a substantive right", the minister had told this newspaper's Washington correspondent after talks with Clinton administration officials. "At the same time, there is certainly an obligation on the media to act responsibly, particularly in the volatile circumstances that exist during a war", Prof. Peiris had explained later on in the interview.

These observations were made after an admission that the Clinton administration had shown some concern about the current censorship in this country in regard to the publication of military news. Prof. Peiris did well to refresh the memory of the US administration about practices Western governments themselves had fallen back on in times of war. At a time of war sensitive military information could not be published freely, lest the foes of the country concerned get hold of it and act on it. Thus in the national interest, Western governments had censored military news at the height of the Second World War, for instance.

The same applies to Sri Lanka. Military news has to be scrutinised by the authorities prior to publication, lest it eventually harms the national interest by being disseminated indiscreetly by media institutions which care more for "hot news" than the national interest.

The Sri Lankan government, in fact, has a more serious problem on its hands than an imminent fascist invasion. The war in this country involves two national groups, whose legitimate interests have to be protected by the government of the day at any cost. It cannot allow the media in this country to luxuriate in the "freedom of the wild ass". Irresponsible reporting and commentary on military matters could fuel communal tensions and create law and order problems. It should be remembered that the 1983 race riots in this country were partly sparked by media institutions which "rushed to print" the news about an ambush in the North which claimed 13 security services personnel.

So, as Prof. Peiris explained to US officials, "at a time of war, certain restrictions on reporting are inevitable". One wonders whether all this probing about the limited censorship is assumed naivete on the part of the officials. The world's sole superpower which sacrifices a staggering amount of its resources both internally and abroad to safeguard its interests need hardly be reminded that there is a category of information called "classified information", which is never released to the press by the authorities. Sometimes such information is withheld from the public for years on account of its sensitivity. Why this ill-concealed curiosity about the media situation in Lanka, then?

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